January 26, 1998 49145 $3.50 U.S., $4.50 Canadian

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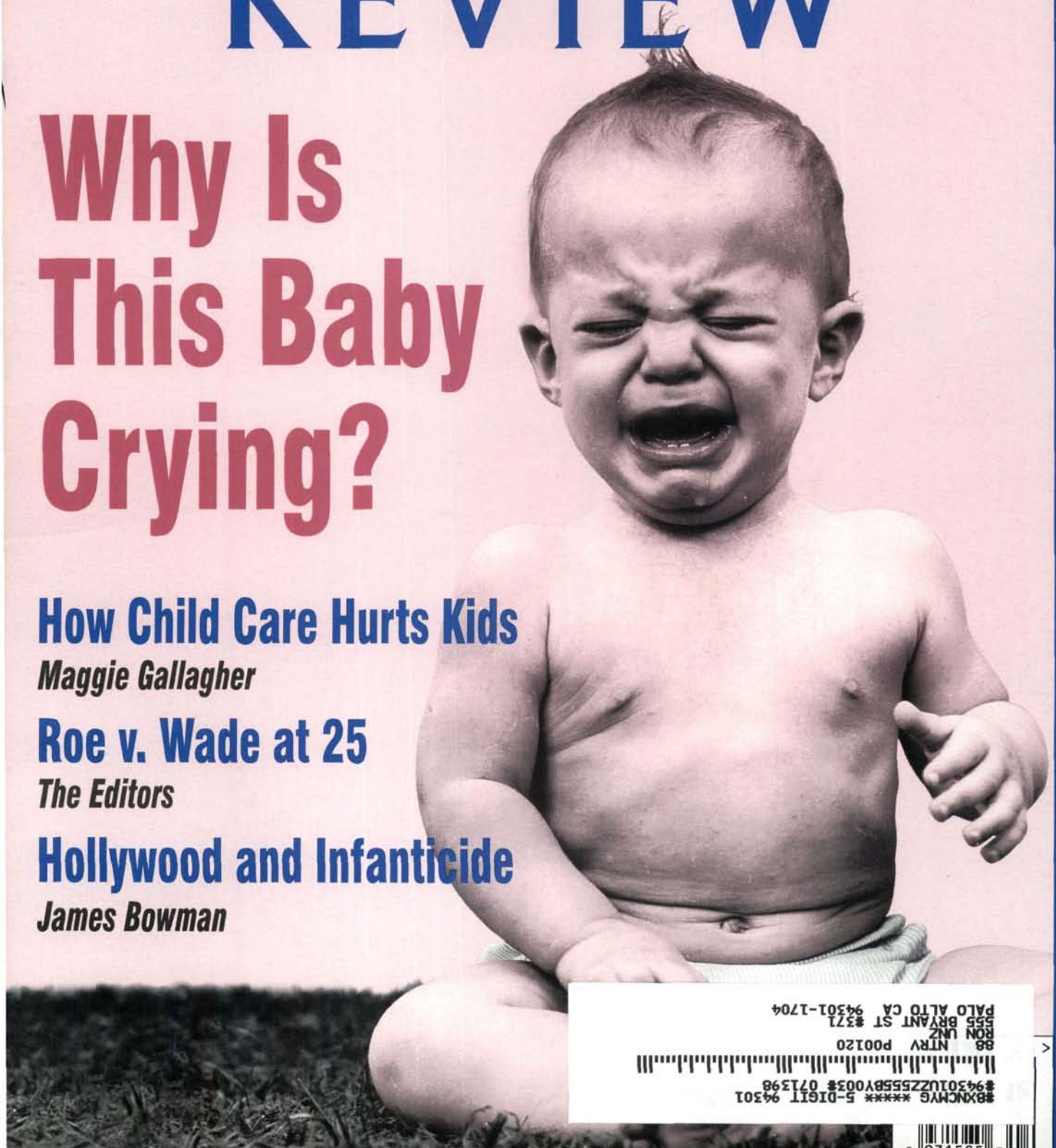
TAXES:
oore & Kudlow

Norman Podhoretz & George MacDonald Fraser on Heroism

NATIONAL REVIEW

Why Is This Baby Crying?



How Child Care Hurts Kids
Maggie Gallagher

Roe v. Wade at 25
The Editors

Hollywood and Infanticide
James Bowman

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TOWERING TASTE

SINCE 1929

ROYAL JAMAICA

IF THERE WERE A BETTER WAY TO MAKE A CIGAR,
WE'D FIND IT. . . THEN WE'D SMOKE IT.

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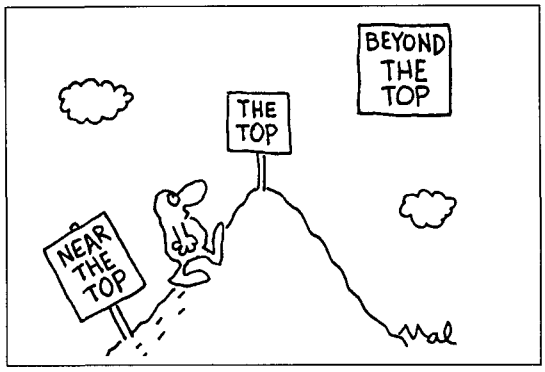
NATIONAL REVIEW

JANUARY 26, 1998 VOL. L, NO. 1



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45 What has become of heroes in our politically correct age? Is there even such a thing any more? **Norman Podhoretz** considers the implications of nihilism and antinomianism. . . . **George MacDonald Fraser**, a footsoldier in Burma during the Second World War, recalls what the word "hero" *used* to mean. Hint: under the old definition, Princess Diana wouldn't qualify. . . . After reading Patrick Glynn's *God: The Evidence* and Gerald L. Schroeder's *The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom*, **Stephen M. Barr** reports that the "leap of faith" has now been reduced to a modest hop. . . . On the way from the Founding to the welfare state, a funny thing happened to the idea of a nation. **Richard Brookhiser** meditates on *Hamilton's Republic: Readings in the American Democratic Tradition*, edited by Michael Lind. . . . **John Simon** returns *The Postman* to its sender, cans *Kundun*, and issues himself a license to kill *Tomorrow Never Dies*. . . . **Andrew Oliver** gets high on innovative airplane food.

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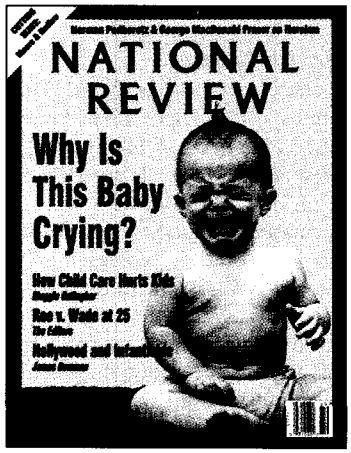

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LETTERS

Sweet Nature

Robert Bork stated at the International Conservative Congress ["Spreading the Word," Dec. 22] that libertarians, like modern liberals, have "a sweet view of human nature." Come again? The libertarians I know share a visceral distrust of those who wield power. It's hard to see what they're worried about if they view human nature as benign. Judge Bork, in contrast, has never met a legislative majority he didn't like. Maybe *he* has a little too much faith in his fellow man.

Gene Healy
Chicago, Ill.

Soft Nature

The punishment dealt James Gardner ["Common 'Cold'?" Dec. 31] should be to read, and re-read, his criticism of Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* until he is aware that he has told us a great deal more about Gardner than about Frazier. To some, Frazier's "soft-spoken" nature is infinitely more acceptable than Mr. Gardner's "gotcha" manner with respect to something as private as lonely masturbation. Considering the nature of the story told, a great deal of "understatement" seems entirely appropriate.

Harry J. Herder Jr.
hjherder@win.bright.net

British Nature

I share many of Anthony Daniels's sentiments ["Euro-Sportsmanship," Nov. 24], but as a citizen of Hampshire, rather than New Hampshire, I question whether we English, who "normally subscribe to the tenets and language of political correctness," do "not find the conduct of the English supporters in Rome in the least offensive." I can only assume that the people he spoke to in England were far from typical. Most of us here are more than civilized. If we were not, would we respond to a quality publication like NATIONAL REVIEW?

Alan Millard
Lee-on-the-Solent, Hants

Liberal Nature

Please spare us George W. Bush as Ramesh Ponnuru's "The Front Runner" [Dec. 22]. To nominate Bush in 2000 would be to repeat his father's failed re-election campaign of '92. I voted for Bush, trusting he would continue Reagan's policies. Instead he dismantled Reagan's initiatives and installed warmed-over Democratic ones, which is why he failed to get re-elected. His son, George W., has already shown similar leanings with his signing of a law circumventing the racial-preference law, and his cave-in to those who wanted University of Texas professor Lino Graglia punished for comments he made on academic competitiveness of different racial groups. Conservatives need another Ronald Reagan, not another George Bush.

Armin Feger
Muncy Valley, Pa.

American Nature?

Scott McConnell ["Americans No More," Dec. 31] has captured what has been widely ignored by "mainstream conservatives," even though the situation has been common knowledge in Southern California

for years. Since the sizable PC crowd on the Right is quick to hurl accusations of racism and the like, it is courageous to address the issue so candidly.

J. F. Quinnelly
quinn_man@webworldinc.com

For those of us living in California it is difficult to feel our traditional U.S. roots. We cannot naively expect that open borders and our direct proximity to Mexico will somehow not affect U.S. sovereignty. America's largely successful experiment with pluralism and assimilation is seriously under attack.

Anthony B. Mazeika
Mission Viejo, Calif.

I'm so glad that some of the basics of mass immigration into my native California are gaining national attention. A national policy that provides for the immigration of millions of unskilled and uneducated people—and their extended families—lacks any consideration for the best interests of U.S. citizens already here. Please keep up the good work, before it's too late.

Mike Scott
Glendora, Calif.

Female Nature

Steve Sailer and Stephen Seiler's "Track & Battlefield" [Dec. 31] reminded me of correspondence several years ago with the Secretary of the Army and several congressmen about my demand that women cadets be integrated into the football and basketball teams at West Point. This seemed appropriate to the planned equal combat role for women. And what better and safer place to demonstrate women as the equal of men? I was told that, unfortunately, the NCAA has different rules. So do the Olympics. Does Saddam Hussein?

Samuel A. Nigro, MD
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Do women even belong in the Olympics? The top women competitors in real sports (e.g., not gymnastics) look like men. They have broad shoulders, narrow hips, and small breasts. Yet they are segregated from men, or they would never make it to the Olympics at all. What is the point of watching masculinized women compete, when we can watch real men whose performances are far superior?

George Kocan
Warrenville, Ill.

Correction

In Matthew Scully's "The Quiet Conservative" [Dec. 31], the Communications Decency Act was attributed to Sen. Jon Kyl. While he did support and vote for the bill, it was sponsored by Sens. Dan Coats (Ind.) and James Exon (Neb.). In addition, Sen. Kyl supports civilian access to encryption technology, provided law-enforcement agencies can apply for court-approved access to decryption keys. —ED.

In Good Faith?

I wish someone would ask Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D., Conn.) to explain publicly why he, an Orthodox Jew, has been voting to keep partial-birth abortion legal ["New Democratic Faith," by Rich Lowry, Nov. 24]. He might respond that Jewish law permits (even requires) a woman to kill her fetus if her life is endangered. Jewish law also says, however, that if the head or a greater part of the fetus has emerged, it has the status of a person.

(*Continues on page 57*)

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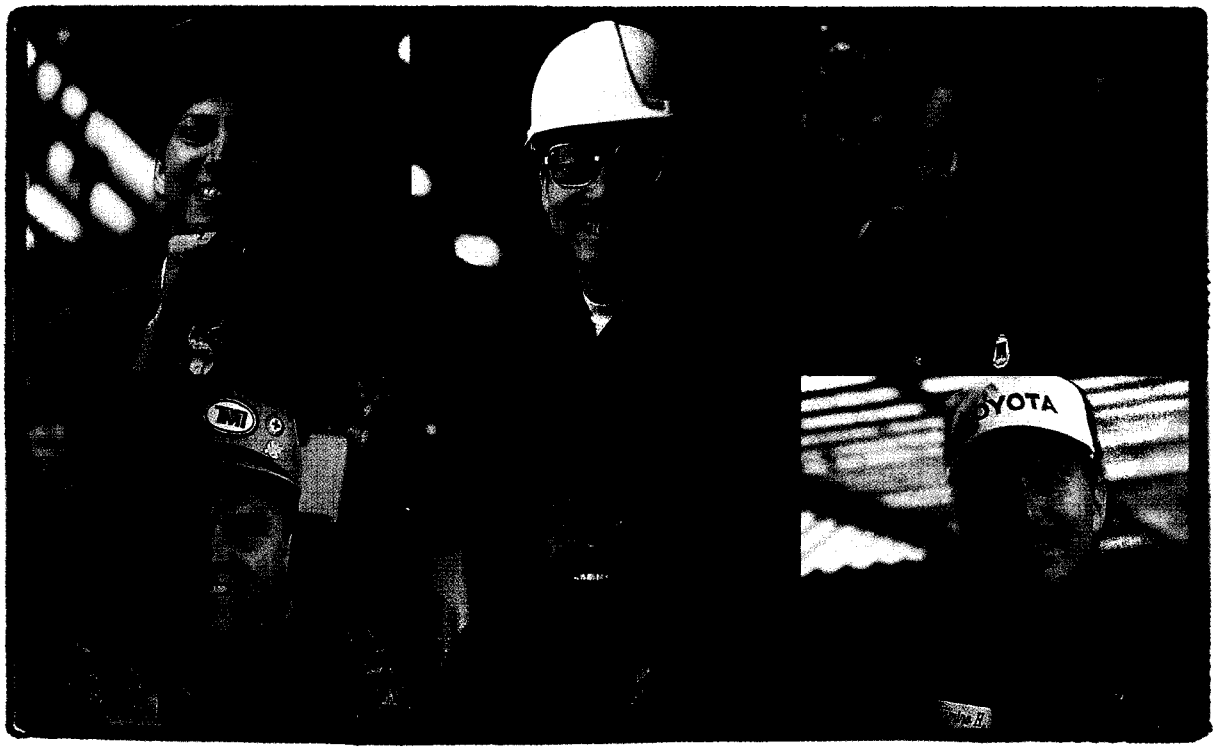
SOME OF THE FEATURES

that go into every

AMERICAN-BUILT TOYOTA



Here in the U.S., Toyota directly employs more than 20,000 people. In fact, more than half the Toyota vehicles sold in America are built by Americans in Kentucky, California - and soon in Indiana as well - with many parts and materials coming from U.S. suppliers. To people across America, and around the world, Toyota is more than just a source of local transport, it's a source of local pride.

TOYOTA People Drive Us

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IN VALEDICTION

As I Was Saying

■ As the masthead on your left proclaims, this is the first issue of NATIONAL REVIEW under new management. My congratulations and best wishes to Rich Lowry, who has generously invited me to bid farewell with a selection of covers and items from this column over the years. We begin in the historic years of 1989, when the Soviet Union retreated from Eastern Europe (see our prophetic cover from January 27 of that year), and 1990, when . . . but read on:

■ It had to happen. A federal judge in New York has found that begging is a "free speech" right protected by the First Amendment.

The judge in question is Leonard Sand, the liberal hero who imposed $500-a-day fines on the Yonkers city councilmen to compel them to vote as he instructed (namely, to build low-income housing in a blue-collar middle-class area), who himself lives in a more affluent district unthreatened by federal judges, and who is married to a member of the Sulzberger clan, owners of the *New York Times*. O happy perfection of coincidences! It is at times like this that I almost wish I were a conspiracy theorist.

February 19, 1990

■ BANNED IN BOSTON DEPT. I knew we had chosen the right man to deal with bilingualism in Canada when our author, Peter Brimelow, was denounced there as "the *éminence grise* of the English-only movement . . ."

Brimelow bristled: "They should have said 'grey eminence.'" *April 16, 1990*

■ Taki Theodoracopulos, the celebrated society writer who got his start in gentler fashion as *NR*'s Vietnam War correspondent, gave a splendid ball in London to mark the collapse of Communism. Among those present were Miss Joan Collins, Count Nikolai Tolstoy, Herr Claus von Bülow, but not alas the late Sir Noël Coward, who otherwise might have written something like:

I went to a marvelous party
To cheer the collapse of the East.
It was in the Savoy,
And the mere hoi polloi
Were excluded—in theory at least.
There wasn't a sign of Walesa.
He must have forgotten the date.
But Freddy (whom no one could say is a Red;
Well-bred is his credo—or is it well-fed?)
Sang "God Save the Queen" while he stood on his head.
I couldn't have liked it more.

December 3, 1990

■ In Germany the fascists goosestepped; in America they jog. *June 10, 1991*

■ Saddam Hussein remains in power [and] a diplomatic silence has descended. If the State Department calculates that a weakened Saddam in power would be the best result, that would be a serious error . . .

If Saddam consolidates his power, he is more likely than any successor to create trouble. He would be bent on recovery and revenge.

April 1, 1991

■ At the exact moment that we sent our last issue off to the printers, tanks were reported to be on their way to attack the Russian Parliament building.

By the time *NR* was in your hands, the coup had collapsed, Mr. Gorbachev had returned to Moscow, the Communist Party had been abolished, the Republics were declaring independence, and Mr. Yeltsin was the leading man in the state.

This enabled readers to evaluate our

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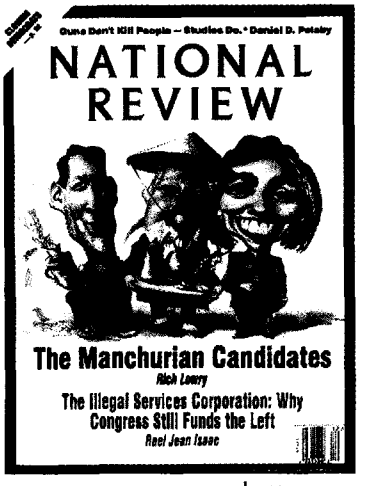
powers of analysis and prediction in the cold light of retrospect.


Guns Don't Kill People — Studies Do. • Daniel D. Polsby
NATIONAL REVIEW
The Manchurian Candidates
Rich Lowry
The Illegal Services Corporation: Why Congress Still Funds the Left
Reel Jean Isaac

Our editorial saw the coup as perhaps "the terminal crisis of the Communist system." Robert Conquest forecast that it would fail, possibly very quickly, and that Gorbachev would end up "wholly in Yeltsin's camp." And I argued that Gorbachev would be Yeltsin's prisoner "in a new Soviet commonwealth of independent Republics without a Communist Party to speak of."

But expect no Pulitzers.

September 23, 1991

■ "I don't think the old words 'liberal' and 'conservative,' 'left' and 'right' have much descriptive meaning any more," said Mr. Derek Shearer, an advisor to Mr. Clinton.

I at once concluded that Mr. Shearer was a "liberal" and probably a "left" one at that . . . Anyone who can't quite fathom what "liberal" or "conservative" means is either halfwitted—unlikely in Mr. Shearer's case—or not being candid. He is hiding something—in this case "liberal" or "left" views.

So watch out for candidates who are baffled by a word like "taxes." They want to raise them. *October 5, 1992*

■ President Bush's graciousness in accepting full responsibility for the Republican defeat should not obscure the fact that he was telling the truth.

November 30, 1992

■ When the first poll appeared showing President Carter more popular than President Reagan, I recognized an instant orthodoxy. Sure enough, a Nexis search reveals a constant theme, from the *Los Angeles Times* ("Carter now scores higher than Reagan") to the *Atlanta Constitution* ("Carter . . . passed Ronald Reagan in the popularity stakes") down to *USA Today* ("Jimmy Carter held in higher regard").

Why is this? Do Americans think Mr. Carter's foreign policy had more success? Or his economic policy? Or what? The polls were silent on such points. Nor were the journalists curious—as if they thought Mr. Carter's superiority too good to be true.

We thought the same thing. So *NR* asked Fabrizio, McLaughlin to hold a more searching poll. Bingo!

Fifty-seven per cent thought Mr. Reagan had done better in creating economic growth and opportunity—with 29.7 per cent for Mr. Carter. On foreign affairs, Mr. Reagan's superiority was 62.2 per cent compared to Mr. Carter's 28.6 per cent. And as for restoring America's spirit and standing in the world, Mr. Reagan was better regarded by 65.6 per cent, to 25.5 per cent for Mr. Carter. A hat trick.

Remember, you read it here first—for you won't be reading it anywhere else a second time. *March 7, 1994*

■ As for Maya Angelou's inaugural poem—words fail us both. She is the poet who put the quota in quotation.

February 15, 1993

■ I noticed the trend of people applauding unfunny but politically correct jokes twenty years ago when a girlfriend dragged me to see *Happy End*, a musical by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.

Brecht's jokes were a perfect example of German humor, being no laughing matter. Even the partisan left-wing audience could not bring itself actually to chuckle at them. So they applauded instead. The general effect was a cross between old-fashioned vaudeville and a meeting of the Supreme Soviet:

"I say, I say, I say, my wife's gone to the West Indies." (Applause.)

"Jamaica?" (Prolonged applause.)

"No, she went of her own accord." (Thunderous and prolonged applause. All delegations stand.)

But demand creates supply. Let it become known there is money in dud jokes and soon you can't cross the road without being elbowed aside by a vast herd of chickens . . . As the grim plague of political correctness spreads, we must expect more jokes that leave us feeling how sad life is. *May 16, 1994*

■ So Mr. Clinton's Haiti policy has "succeeded." That is to say, the threat of a U.S. invasion persuaded the junta to make way for a left-wing anti-American priest-politician of uncertain honesty, balance, and attachment to democracy.

The episode confirms the three principles of American diplomacy as revealed here in May 1990:

1. We cannot pursue our interests if they conflict with our principles.
2. We can pursue our principles only if they conflict with our interests.
3. Our principles and our interests never coincide . . . *October 10, 1994*

■ With a week to the 1994 mid-term election, pundits have already assessed its significance: the results will not be a rejection of government.

On the *MacNeil–Lehrer News Hour,* Roger Rosenblatt explained that when voters renounced government and all its works and pomps, they really wanted better government. And if they demanded volunteerism in place of government, they really wanted government-organized volunteerism.

Mr. Rosenblatt was not pressed to say what voters would mean if they claimed to *like* government. It's a problem in pure theory, of course, but I suspect he would prove gratifyingly literal-minded.

November 21, 1994

■ The *New York Times* reported on a case of four commuters arrested on an evening train by a plainclothes policewoman. They had been playing cards.

The four desperadoes were "taken off the train, handcuffed, fingerprinted, and photographed. They were then charged with possessing a gambling device: a deck of cards."

Now, why was a policewoman cracking down on poker-players when New York is rife with muggings, rapes, murders, and burglaries?

Rest assured, gentle reader, that her encounter with the gamblers was no part of her duties. She had boarded the train "in search of smokers." *June 12, 1995*

■ Thought for the Road: "Socialism repeats itself—the first time as genocide, the second time as therapy."

—John O'Sullivan

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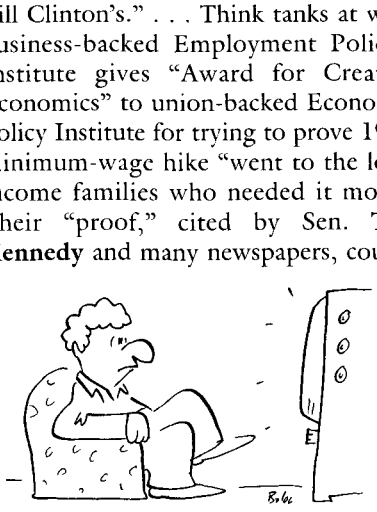
FOR THE RECORD

■ In *Fortune*, **David Shribman** argues that President **Clinton**'s appointment of **Bill Lann Lee** to civil-rights post at Justice Department means Prez wants to mend fences with liberals who dominate House Democratic caucus; Shribman also reports Treasury officials want to "[p]ropose something outrageous yet appealing," "like a really, really big tax cut for the middle class that would require a tax hike for top earners." . . . **Tarrance** Group, pollsters previously considered middle-of-the-road Republicans, work with **Stan Greenberg**, Clinton's 1992 pollster, on project for National Education Association on attitudes toward school construction. . . . Speaker **Newt Gingrich**, asked if he is interested in 2000 presidential race: "Sure, of course. . . . If you put together a list of twenty, I am on the list." Says he will make decision with wife, **Marianne**, on Labor Day the year before election—as Bill Clinton did with **Hillary** in 1991. . . . In campaign letter, Rep. **Steve Largent** (R., Okla.) notes that in defending conservative values he has clashed with Rep. **Barney Frank** (D., Mass.), hard-left actor **Alec Baldwin**—and Gingrich. . . . **Mark Shields** observes that in last 10 presidential elections (1960–96), Republicans have chosen front-runner from year before convention every time, Democrats only twice (in 1960; and in 1996, when Clinton faced no challenge).

■ Senate Watch: Rep. **Bob Inglis** (R., S.C.) challenges Sen. **Fritz Hollings** (D.), but takes flak from Right, according to *Wall Street Journal*, as former county GOP chairman **Stephen Brown**, who also wants chance at Hollings, criticizes '97 budget deal. . . . **Geraldine Ferraro** got kid-glove treatment from CNN (where she co-hosted *Crossfire*) as she announced challenge to Sen. **Al D'Amato** (R., N.Y.); Rep. **Pete King** (R.) is being urged to challenge state's other senator, **Daniel Patrick Moynihan**, in 2000. . . . *Business Week* reports that Senate Majority Leader **Trent Lott** (R., Miss.) is targeting Democratic Sens. **Jeff Bingaman** (N.M.), **Harry Reid** (Nev.), and **Richard Bryan** (Nev.) as possible party-switchers. . . . In *Mother Jones*, **Michael Lind** proposes breaking 50 states into 75—including New Cuba (southern Florida); Orange, Reagan, and Marin (in California); Long Island. Rationale: Senate violates "right to democratic representation" of voters in big states. This "malapportionment" put **Clarence Thomas** on Supreme Court, "gave **Adolf Hitler** time to conquer most of Europe without American opposition. . . . and the problem is only getting worse."

■ Media Watch: Small Business Survival Committee's **Karen Kerrigan** denies global-warming forecasts on *Nightline*; **Ted Koppel** compares skeptics to Flat Earth Society. . . . *The Economist* describes hit film *Titantic* as "an exercise in class hatred that few European socialists would dare to display," and warns that punishing wealth "might turn out to be like trying to ram an iceberg." . . . *Politically Incorrect* host **Bill Maher** defends his show by analogy in *Mother Jones*: "I can't even get the *Wall Street Journal*. I look at all that print, and it just looks too intimidating to me. I'm much more comfortable with *USA Today*." Maher explains 1996 presidential outcome: ". . . we didn't know if we could live up to [**Bob Dole**'s] standards. But we knew we could live up to Bill Clinton's." . . . Think tanks at war: business-backed Employment Policies Institute gives "Award for Creative Economics" to union-backed Economic Policy Institute for trying to prove 1996 minimum-wage hike "went to the low-income families who needed it most." Their "proof," cited by Sen. **Ted Kennedy** and many newspapers, counted adults living alone as "families"; counted families with annual income up to $37,000 as poor; and ignored unreported income and the unemployed. "Intentional deception," charge awardgivers. . . . *New York Times* writer **Maureen Dowd**'s reputation for deftness, independence from conventional wisdom suffers another blow with publication of column wondering why "good guys" **Howard Baker**, **George Mitchell**, **Ann Richards** are "pocketing tobacco's blood money." Dowd writes that "the vile tobacco industry" is "America's leading sin industry" and "a particular scourge of women, minorities, and the poor" (maybe she's thinking of Psychic Friends Network).



"It's 10:00 P.M. Do you know where your FBI file is?"

■ In respected annual survey, nonpartisan human-rights group Freedom House finds record 81 of 191 countries "free," with 55 per cent of world's people under elected leaders—but warns of regression in Third World. . . . **Mohammed Mahathir**'s Malaysia already backtracking on new austerity regime. . . . In Moscow, Foreign Minister **Yevgeny Primakov** attacks West for trying to force Russia into "patron and client" relationship (see "Russian Roulette," p. 25). First Deputy PM **Boris Nemtsov** signs nuclear-power deal with China. . . . **Yuri Mamatov** latest in wave of suicides of Soviet scientist-bureaucrats as funds diminish. . . . Britain's Labour PM **Tony Blair** hits first political bump with revolt from Left over welfare cuts for single mothers; second with arrest of son of Home Secretary **Jack Straw**—who is in charge of juvenile crime and drug programs—for selling drugs in pub. . . Chief of staff Maj.-Gen. **Gabi Ashkenazi** says 30 per cent of Israel's reserve force does not report for duty when ordered. . . . At biennial summit, Commonwealth of Nations quietly withdraws threat to sanction oil-rich Nigeria for violating human rights. . . . Correction: Item in last issue's "For the Record" misnamed Puerto Rican Gov. **Pedro Rosello and** leading newspaper *El Nuevo Dia*.

■ *New York Times* reports on shake-up at radical Pacifica Radio. Executive **Patricia Scott**'s agenda includes "improving studios so that the sound of flushing toilets is no longer heard on the air and standardizing broadcast schedules." For changes, she is branded "Stalinist yuppie."

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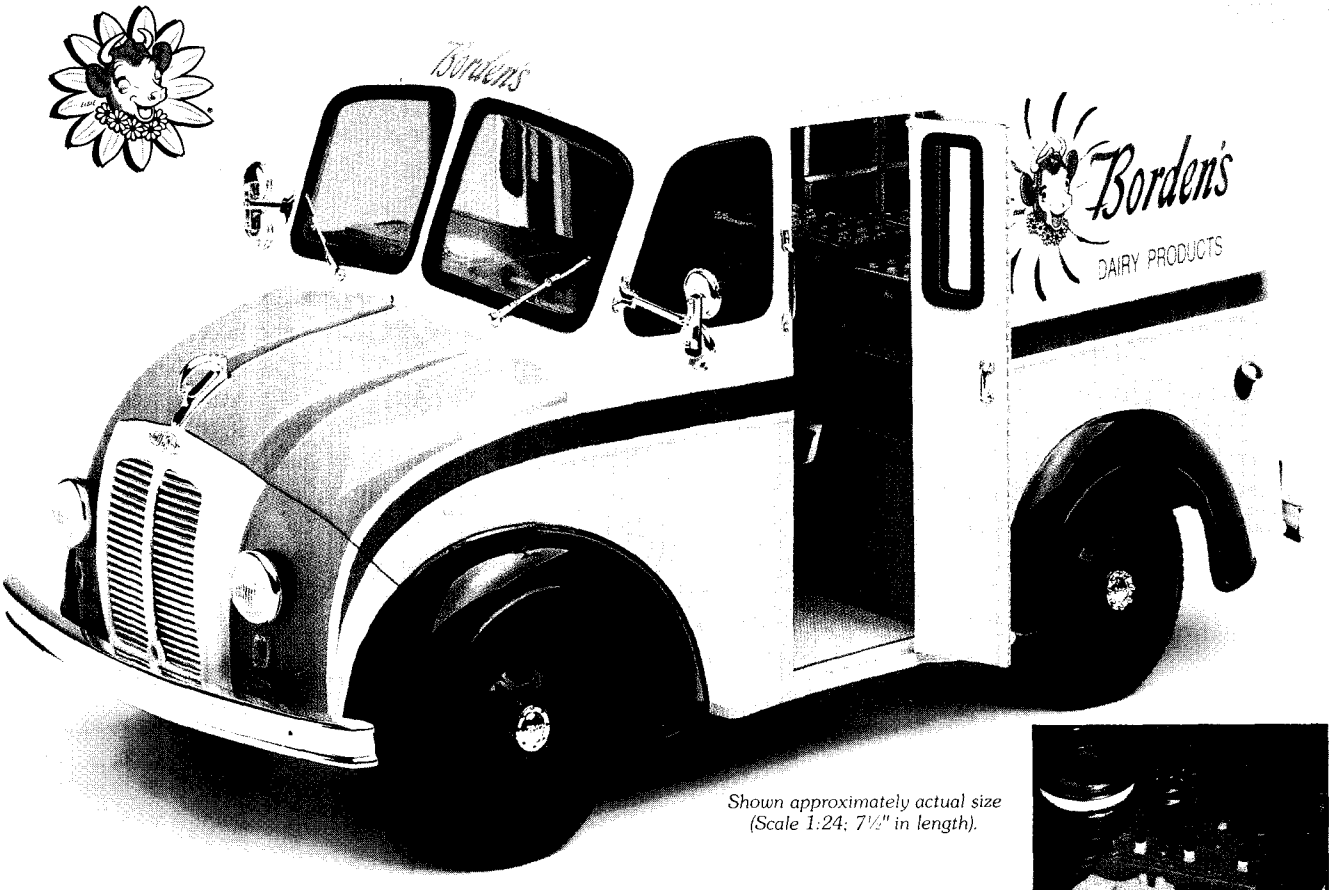
THE 1950 *Borden's* MILK TRUCK



Shown approximately actual size (Scale 1:24; 7½" in length).

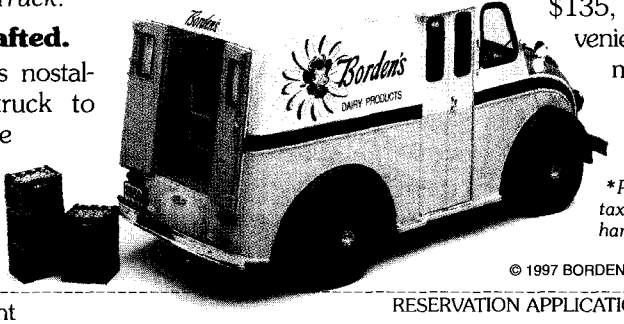
A collector-quality die-cast metal replica crafted from over 200 precision parts.

The Borden's Milk Truck was part of the fabric of American life in the 1950's. In fair weather or foul, yellow and white trucks with the familiar, smiling face of "Elsie the Cow" on their sides would make their rounds delivering the day's milk.

Now, you have the opportunity to own an authentic die-cast metal replica of a classic piece of Americana...the *1950 Borden's Milk Truck*.

Expertly crafted.

To replicate this nostalgic Borden's truck to perfection, the Danbury Mint has crafted this superb model in large 1:24 scale using more than 200 individual parts. The memorable snub-nosed grille, sliding side doors, and "Elsie the Cow" logo are all authentically reproduced. The model even comes complete with 20 removable milk crates!



Affordably priced.

You can acquire your *1950 Borden's Milk Truck* for just $135, payable in five convenient monthly installments of $27*. Mail your Reservation Application today!

**Plus any applicable sales tax and $1.60 shipping and handling per installment.*

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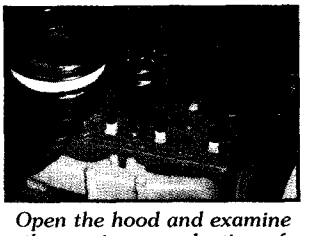
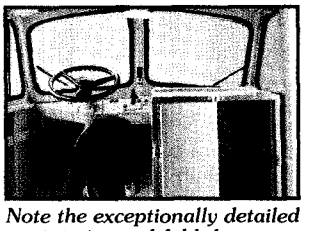
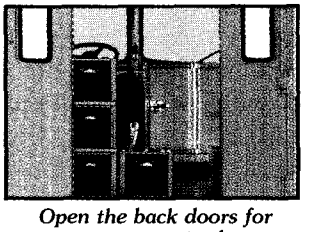


Open the hood and examine the precise reproduction of the truck's 4-cylinder engine.



Note the exceptionally detailed interior and fold-down, swing-aside driver's seat.



Open the back doors for easy access to the miniature milk crates.

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06857

RESERVATION APPLICATION

Send no money now.

Name _____
(Please print clearly.)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____
(Orders subject to acceptance.)

Allow 4 to 8 weeks after initial payment for shipment.

7423ENJ2

THE 1950 BORDEN'S MILK TRUCK

Yes! Reserve my *1950 Borden's Milk Truck* as described in this announcement. If not completely satisfied, I may return my replica within 30 days for replacement or refund.

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THE WEEK

■ First Dog Buddy has been obeying Bill Clinton with such slavish devotion, he should have been named CNN.

■ *After two slow news weeks, the networks reported that Congress*—Hello. Why were there two slow news weeks? *Because people were celebrating Christmas and New Year's.* So? Do important things just stop happening because of the calendar? *No, but important legislating and discussing of important things slow down.* Wait a second—do we have solons and pundits to keep watch on important things, or on one another? *Ah—could you rephrase that, please?* So, apart from the odd horseman of the Apocalypse cantering by, most of what the political and verbal classes do is self-generated wind? *Next question, please.*

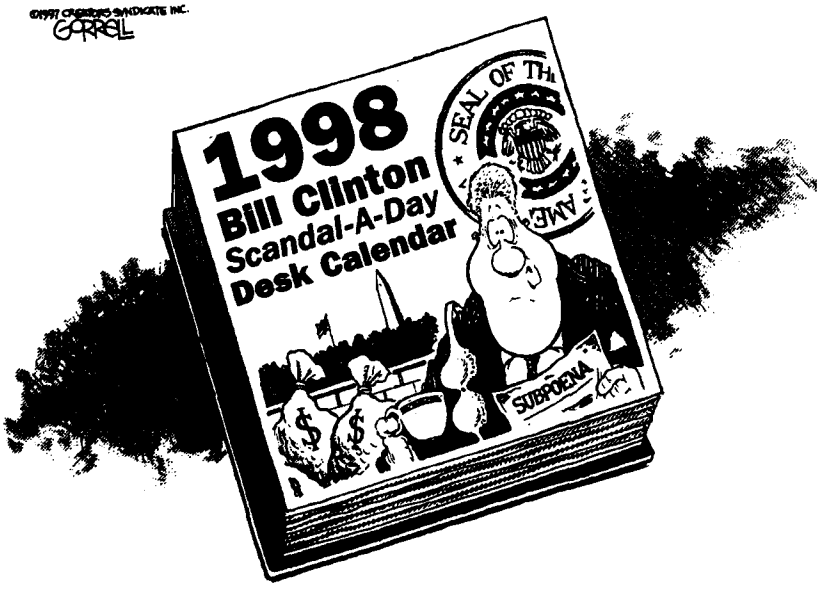
■ We thought we were kidding, in 1994, when we suggested (in "The Week") a tax on the number of pounds by which people exceed their recommended weight. Now, as *NR* alumnus and syndicated columnist Jacob Sullum points out, junk-food taxes have received a respectful hearing in the *New York Times* and *U.S. News & World Report* (which this month presented a "Twinkie tax" as one of 16 items to improve the world). For the record, then, we shall now add the disclaimer Sullum recommends: "Just kidding! Please do not try this in Washington."

■ In his annual state-of-the-judiciary speech, Chief Justice William Rehnquist warned that demands on the courts were outstripping the supply of federal judges. Predictably, nobody has paid much attention to his argument in the same speech that the courts are being asked to do too much. Instead, the speech set off a flurry of complaints by Democrats and the media that Senate Republicans are refusing to confirm enough Clinton appointees. "A constitutional crisis," said Sen. Patrick Leahy (D., Vt.), accusing conservatives of politicizing the courts. There *is* a constitutional crisis (see "Dead Reckoning," below), but it has little to do with Senate obstreperousness. As Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) points out, Mr. Clinton has not bothered to make nominations for 42 of the 82 vacancies on the federal bench; and the nation survived 148 vacancies under President Bush. Clinton has appointed more judges than Ronald Reagan had at the same stage of his Presidency—and Reagan had a Senate run by his own party. If anything, the Senate should be faulted for its meekness: no Clinton nominees have been defeated, and only three recorded votes have been held on judges. A complete freeze on Clinton confirmations, while unlikely, would be perfectly defensible at a time when the courts have politicized themselves. Next year the Chief Justice should lecture his colleagues on the bench instead of the Senate.

■ Reverting to form, Sen. Hatch offered Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer as the sort of nominees "whose approach would give us hardly any problems." Alas, it's probably true.

■ The time for Social Security reform must be coming when President Clinton feels the need to get at the head of the parade. This month he is likely to challenge Congress to pass a bi-partisan plan by 1999, and he may call a special session for the purpose. He probably has in mind a payroll-tax increase along the lines of Sen. Edward Kennedy's proposal to apply the payroll tax to all wages (it is currently capped at $65,400). Republicans, nervous as ever about "tax fairness," might just go along. A better course, being considered by Sen. Phil Gramm (R., Tex.), would be to let individuals divert part of their payroll taxes to a fund for their own retirement and health needs. To finance the move, the government could use tobacco-settlement revenues (Congress never promised the lawyers that they would get *all* the loot) and part of the emerging budget surplus. Meanwhile, Democrats should be called on the bluff they made during the debate on the Balanced Budget Amendment: that they would approve the Amendment if it included protections for Social Security. As Democrats try to wiggle out of that promise—which would entail substantial, real cuts in discretionary spending—Republicans would gain leverage over the shape of reforms, and maybe other matters too.

■ At its winter meeting this month, the Republican National Committee plans to take up a resolution that would deny party funds to any candidate who opposes a ban on



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partial-birth abortion. Conservatives should side with RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson on this one and oppose such a ban. The GOP is winning on the issue of partial-birth abortion, and the spotlight should remain trained on the Democrats as the party of infanticide. Let the political marketplace deal with the handful of Republican outriders, as the majority of New Jersey voters did recently in refusing to support Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, whose Republican legislature went on and overrode her veto of a ban on the procedure.

■ No sooner had Geraldine Ferraro announced that she would seek his Senate seat than Alfonse D'Amato (R., N.Y.) hit her with new mob charges, as distinguished from the old mob charges that surfaced in 1984. Then, it turned out that her husband, John Zaccaro, had been the landlord of a Gambino family kingpin, a gambling den, and a porn distributor. Now, it seems that Miss Ferraro got a birthday party and a speaking gig from Arthur Coia, a labor leader whom an FBI memo described as a mob "puppet." No fair, Senator; how can you be a Democrat these days and *avoid* crooks? Miss Ferraro chided the "old politics of smear," and said Sen. D'Amato's policies were "devastating" to women. Get out the raincoats; it's going to be one of those campaigns.

■ Just before Christmas a Washington think tank released a study suggesting (surprise!) that the income gap between rich and poor families in the U.S. is wider than ever. On the surface, the data in this report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) are correct. The richest fifth did indeed receive about half of total personal income in 1996, up from 46 per cent in 1990, while the share received by the poorest fifth slipped below 4 per cent during that period. The CBPP's sins are ones of omission: The typical American family—husband, wife, two children—enjoyed unbroken income gains throughout the past quarter-century, going from $42,458 (in 1996 dollars) in 1970 to $51,405 in 1996. But "rich" families are different from poor or even middle-income families—and not just because they have more money. They are larger and send nearly twice as many family members to work. "Rich" families are overwhelmingly traditional—husband and wife living under the same roof. Poor families, in contrast, are increasingly headed by women, some of them divorced, but most never married to the father(s) of their children. If these factors don't assuage your conscience, then try this: the consumption of the poorest fifth of U.S. households is more than twice their income. Underreporting of income explains some of this, but the biggest factor is age. The poorest fifth of U.S. families includes a disproportionate number of retired people who own their own homes and live off capital rather than income. As America ages, her "poor" will increasingly consist of older people who, when they worked, were "rich."

■ For a quarter of a century, New Hampshire students have ranked first or second in SAT scores. Not coincidentally, their schools had the lowest proportions of federal and state education funding (3 and 8 per cent, respectively) and the highest proportion of local funding (86 per cent). New Hampshire was the public educationist's nightmare—a place where any citizen could jeopardize the local school budget at a town-hall meeting, and where the virtues or vices of school personnel were publicly aired at contract time. Alas, in December, this last bastion of neighborhood control fell. Reasoning that local property taxes are state taxes, and must therefore be equalized or supplemented, the New Hampshire Supreme Court overruled decades of decisions by lower courts. "I was not appointed to establish educational policy," wrote Associate Justice Sherman Horton, the lone dissenter. ". . . I should not involve myself in social engineering, no matter how worthy the cause."

■ Conciliatory overtures by Iran's president, Mohammed Khatami, are hastening the day of some sort of American–Iranian "dialogue." In the abstract, dialogue is a neutral thing: full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union did not prevent America from pursuing whatever policy it wanted, from détente to rollback. In the Iranian case, however, the context is not auspicious. There has been no change in the Iranian policies that are at the heart of the conflict, and gushing over a possible dialogue will further deepen the Clinton Administration's reluctance to enforce sanctions against foreign companies investing in Iran. The collapse of America's sanctions policy will guarantee an unequal conversation, from which Iran will benefit far more than we.

■ The capable historian Michael Beschloss, pressed for a statement concerning Michael Kennedy's death, remarked that the Kennedys suffer "almost on a Shakespearean level. . . . There is just an uncanny amount of tragedy in this family." Woe and wreckage, yes—but tragedy? Michael Kennedy, 39, was killed on an Aspen ski slope while playing football on skis. Without poles. Joking around. He thumbed his nose at nemesis—a harsh judgment, but nemesis is a harsh preceptor. Nor is it "tragic" to drive drunkenly off a bridge and drown a young

Pass It On

Al Gore's been getting funny looks.
At backyard barbecues, he cooks
With solemn dedication, while
On platforms his transparent guile
Brings out the beast in Maureen Dowd.
He's dead—but don't say that out loud.

—W. H. von Dreele

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woman, or to flip a Jeep and paralyze a young woman, or (if the allegations are in fact true) to commit statutory rape with a 14-year-old baby-sitter. The two assassinations, of course, are something else, each of them sui generis. But the rest of this family's saga is astonishingly tawdry, and scarcely, Mr. Beschloss, on a plane with *Hamlet* or *Lear*.

■ It was widely, and misleadingly, reported that, thanks to a court settlement, homosexual couples can now adopt children in New Jersey. The state agency that oversees adoptions had a regulation decreeing that unmarried couples were ineligible as adoptive parents. In practice, though, the agency had for years allowed members of gay couples to adopt as single parents, then let their lovers repeat the adoption in the capacity of "second parent." So why the jubilation when the regulation was overturned? (One gay adoptive parent called it "a victory for goodness and equality.") Because what's at stake is less practical than theological. Whatever the climate of opinion in big coastal cities, most Americans regard the defining homosexual act as problematic, to say the least. That can't help but weigh on gay consciences. What gay activists really seek is the assurance that what they do is okay. Yet no matter how often that assurance is demanded, and officially given, it fails to satisfy. The suspicion then arises that the activists will never be fully convinced of their own righteousness—regardless of what rulings the courts make.

■ Health as Religion, Chapter #3,415,617: On Christmas Eve the *Los Angeles Times* ran a story under the headline "Saturated Fat May Lower Stroke Risk, Controversial Study Finds." While there were some questions about the study's methodology, the real reason it was "controversial" is that it challenged the reigning orthodoxy that eating saturated fat is a mortal sin. If the study's findings hold up, what they suggest is the common-sense conclusion that there are trade-offs in life, and that, as human beings come in all sorts and conditions, what is dangerous for one may be harmless, or even beneficial, for another. But no, hrumphed Dr. Scott Grundy, who helped write the federal guidelines on fat. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* "should never have accepted this paper. . . . These studies—they're never meant to be reported in the newspaper."

■ As soon as the press digested the news that the congressional class of '94 included Rep. Sonny Bono (R., Calif.), the jokes started: Cher; the long hair. *Time* inaugurated a Bono Watch. In truth, Sonny Bono, who died in a skiing accident this week, was earnest and principled, with a saving sparkle about politics and himself. RIP.

■ According to a summary of new California state laws from the past year published in the *Los Angeles Times*, in 1998 the Golden State can look forward to the following: "College students can earn money tutoring students in kindergarten through sixth grade in reading, arithmetic, and other subjects" (such tutoring had been illegal, one assumes). Licensed audiologists can legally remove ear wax (also previously outlawed). "Gas-station employees face a fine of $100 if they fail to help . . . disabled drivers refuel their vehicles." Those Californians who clone themselves can be fined by health authorities, whether for an amount greater or less than $100 is unclear. Family members of Death Row inmates have a right to watch their kin get executed. And soil from the San Joaquin Valley is henceforth the official "state dirt."

■ Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi won a fifth five-year term in an election described by neutral observers as "flawed and chaotic," though "not substantially rigged." It is good to see the Third World meet the exacting standards which the Senate deems acceptable for Louisiana.

■ Kudos to Walt Disney for zinging the humor-impaired by appending to its new movie, *Mr. Magoo*, the following Swiftian disclaimer: "The preceding film is not intended as an accurate portrayal of blindness or poor eyesight, which does not imply an impairment of one's ability to be employed in a wide range of jobs, raise a family, perform important civic duties, or engage in a well-rounded life. All people with disabilities deserve a fair chance to live and work without being impeded by prejudice."

■ What the White House really dislikes about the shot of Bill and Hill dancing on the beach at St. Thomas is that the photo is floating around the Internet under the legend, "SAVE THE WHALES."

Dead Reckoning

A QUARTER-CENTURY has passed since the Supreme Court struck down the laws of every state in the nation, in the name of a constitutional right to abortion it had just discovered. In *Roe* v. *Wade*, the Court prohibited any regulation of abortion in the first trimester, allowed only regulations pertaining to the health of the mother in the second, and mandated that any regulation in the third make an exception for maternal health. In the companion case of *Doe* v. *Bolton*, the Court insisted on the broadest definition of health—economic, familial, emotional. Legal scholar Mary Ann Glendon describes the result as the most radical pro-abortion policy in the democratic world. It permits abortion at any stage of pregnancy, for any reason or for no reason. It has licensed the killing of some 35 million members of the human family so far.

The abortion regime was born in lies. In Britain (and in California, pre-*Roe*), the abortion lobby deceptively promoted legal revisions to allow "therapeutic" abortions—and then defined every abortion as "therapeutic." The abortion lobby lied about Jane Roe, claiming her preg-

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nancy resulted from a gang rape. It lied about the number of back-alley abortions. Justice Blackmun relied on fictitious history to argue, in *Roe*, that abortion had never been a common-law crime.

The abortion regime is also sustained by lies. Its supporters constantly lie about the radicalism of *Roe*: even now, most Americans who "agree with *Roe* v. *Wade*" in polls think that it left third-term abortions illegal and restricted second-term abortions. They have lied about the frequency and "medical necessity" of partial-birth abortion. Then there are the euphemisms: "terminating a pregnancy," abortion "providers," "products of conception." "The fetus is only a potential human being"—as if it might as easily become an elk. "It should be between a woman and her doctor"—the latter an abortionist who has never met the woman before and who has a financial interest in her decision. This movement cannot speak the truth.

Roe's supporters said at the time that the widespread availability of abortion would lead to fewer unwanted pregnancies, hence less child abuse; it has not. They said that fewer women would die from back-alley abortions; the post-1940s decline in the number of women who died from abortions, the result of antibiotics, actually slowed after *Roe*—probably because the total number of abortions rose. They said it would reduce illegitimacy and child poverty, predictions that now seem like grim jokes.

Pro-lifers were, alas, more prescient. They claimed the West had started down the slippery slope of a progressive devaluation of human life. After the unborn would come the elderly and the infirm—more burdens to others; more obstacles to others' goals; probably better off dead, like "unwanted children." And so now we are debating whether to allow euthanasia, whether to create embryos for experimental purposes, whether to permit the killing of infants about to leave the womb.

And what greater claim on our protection, after all, does that infant have a moment *after* birth? He still lacks the attributes of "personhood"—rationality, autonomy, rich interactions—that pro-abortion philosophers consider the preconditions of a right to life. The argument boils down to this assertion: If we want to eliminate you and you cannot stop us, we are justified in doing it. Might makes right. Among intellectuals, infanticide is in the first phase of a movement from the unthinkable to the arguable to the debatable to the acceptable.

Everything abortion touches, it corrupts. It has corrupted family life. In the war between the sexes, abortion tilts the playing field toward predatory males, giving them another excuse for abandoning their offspring: She *chose* to carry the child; let her pay for her choice. Our law now says, in effect, that fatherhood has no meaning, and we are shocked that some men have learned that lesson too well. It has corrupted the Supreme Court, which has protected the abortion license even while tacitly admitting its lack of constitutional grounding. If the courts can invent such a right, unmoored in the text, tradition, or logic of the Constitution, then they can do almost anything; and so they have done. The law on everything from free speech to biotechnology has been distorted to accommodate abortionism. And abortion has deeply corrupted the practice of medicine, transforming healers into killers.

Most of all, perhaps, it has corrupted liberalism. For all its flaws, liberalism could until the early Seventies claim a proud history of standing up for the powerless and downtrodden, of expanding the definition of the community for whom we pledge protection, of resisting the idea that might makes right. The Democratic Party has casually abandoned that legacy. Liberals' commitment to civil rights, it turns out, ends when the constituency in question can offer neither votes nor revenues.

Abortion-on-demand has, however, also called into being in America a pro-life movement comprising millions of ordinary citizens. Their largely unsung efforts to help pregnant women in distress have prevented countless abortions. And their political witness has helped maintain a pro-life ethic that has stopped millions more. The conversions of conscience have almost all been to the pro-life side—Bernard Nathanson, Nat Hentoff, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. The conversions of convenience have mostly gone the other way, mainly politicians who wanted to get ahead in the Democratic Party—Jesse Jackson, Dick Gephardt. The fight against abortion has resulted in unprecedented dialogue and cooperation between Catholics and Protestants, first on moral values and now increasingly on theological ones. It has helped transform the Republican Party from a preserve of elite WASPs into a populist and conservative party.

True, few politicians of either party—with honorable exceptions like Henry Hyde, Chris Smith, Jesse Helms, Bob Casey, Charles Canady, and Rick Santorum—have provided leadership in the struggle. Not because opposition to abortion is unpopular—throughout the *Roe* era, 70 per cent of the public has supported laws that would prohibit 90 per cent of abortions—but because politicians, and even more the consultants and journalists and big-money donors to whom they listen, tend to move in elite circles where accepting abortion is de rigueur and pro-life advocacy at best an offense against good taste. Since everyone they know favors legal abortion, they understandably conclude that everyone does. But there is

Rubin's Cauldron

With eye of toad and buckets of
Taxpayer money, plus a shove
At nauseous bankers who resist
Home cooking from an alchemist,
The Secretary toils like mad,
But bubbles have been smelling bad.

—W. H. von Dreele

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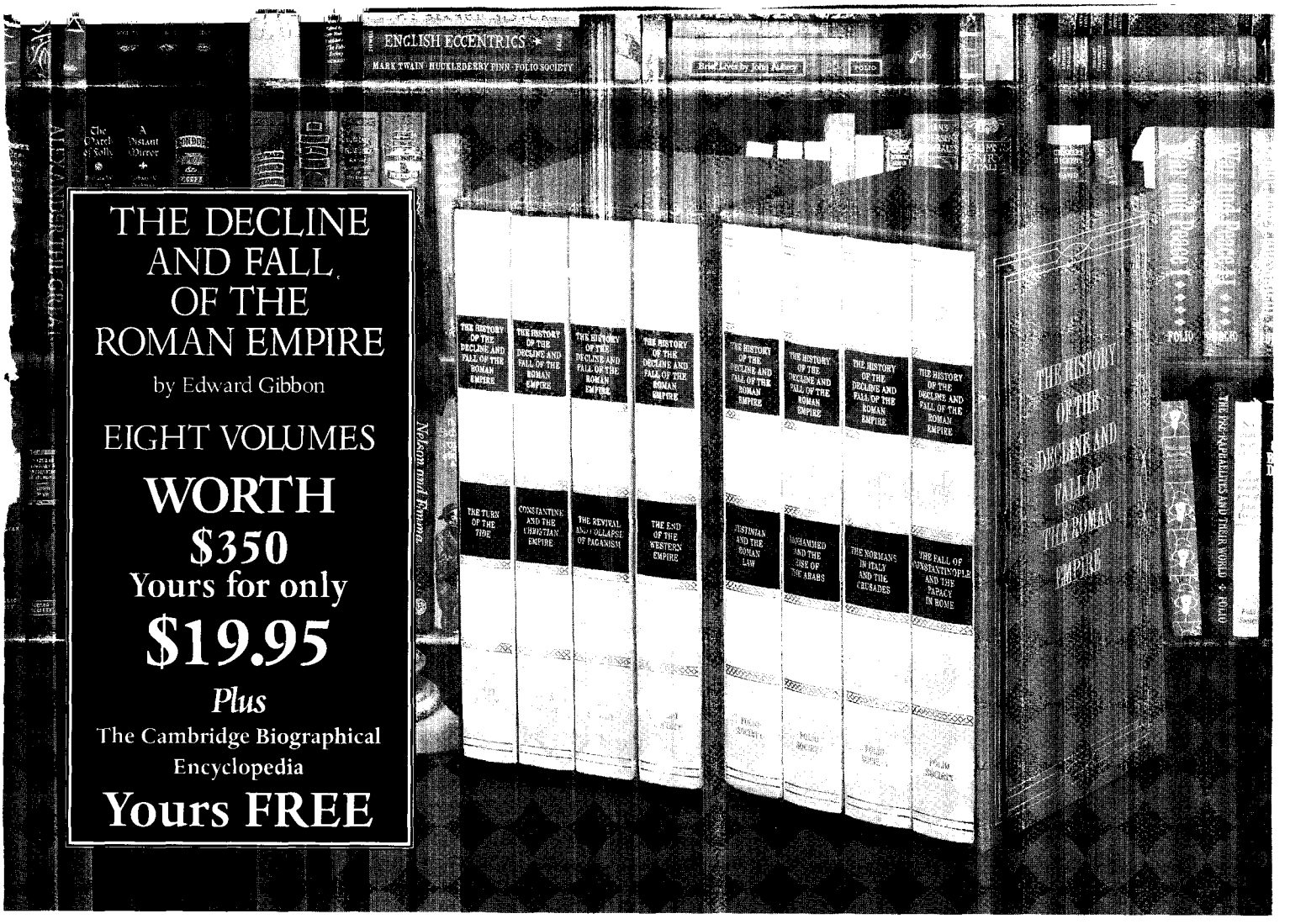

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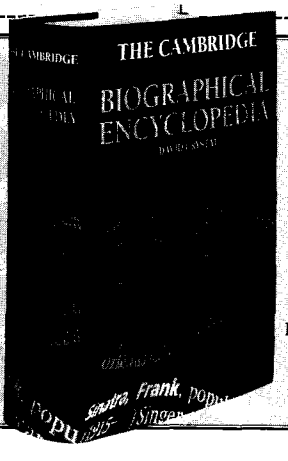

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progress even here. The pro-abortion intellectual front is crumbling. Supporters of the license increasingly concede that what they support is, indeed, the taking of human life. Pro-lifers, their convictions rooted in firmer soil, have not had to make reciprocal concessions.

There can be little doubt that, left to the normal workings of democracy, abortion laws would generally be protective of infants in the womb. The main obstacle on our path to a society where every child is welcomed in life and protected in law, then, remains what it has always been: the Supreme Court. There abortionism is well entrenched; and last year the Court appeared to slam the door on the legal possibility of a congressional override of its decisions on abortion or anything else. By defining a practice at odds with our deep and settled moral convictions as part of the fundamental law of the land, the Supreme Court has created a slow-motion constitutional crisis. This is what comes of courting death.

Piling On the Bailout

PAT Buchanan could not have scripted a better economic crisis than the one now raging in Asia. "World government"—i.e, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank—is bailing out Asian bankers and various multinational corporate fatcats in a way that could harm American workers. The Clinton Administration is ponying up taxpayers' money to support the effort. And the GOP congressional leadership has hardly mustered a peep of protest. All of this presents such a juicy target that Buchanan even finds a dedicated free-trader like Jack Kemp on his side.

Buchanan loves to hate the Asia bailout because it helps him tar the global economy and free trade generally. U.S. taxpayer bailouts, goes the argument, are the inevitable price of free trade. If this were true, it would be a small price to pay. But it is not. The Asia bailout is bad policy for a number of reasons, most of them grounded in free-trade principles.

Buchanan complains that, if bankers and portfolio managers are allowed to take profits, they should also be allowed to absorb losses. About this he is correct—and the bailout will undermine this important principle. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said as much, when he warned the Economic Club of New York a few weeks ago about the moral hazard of appearing "to guarantee the liabilities of sovereign governments or failed domestic businesses." Three years ago, during the Mexican bailout, German central banker Hans Tietmeyer made exactly the same point. He argued that U.S. investment houses should at least suffer a minor "haircut" lest the wrong signal be sent to international bankers. Indeed, the

Chambers in the Morning

DON Imus, as his millions of radio listeners know, takes a special interest in politics, and lately he has been talking about the new Sam Tanenhaus biography of Whittaker Chambers. He recently spoke with *NR*'s Matthew Carolan about the book, and about the Hiss–Chambers case.

NR: Were you familiar with the Chambers case before you read the Tanenhaus book?
Imus: A little. I had grown up thinking, you know, that Alger Hiss was probably innocent. So I was shocked, particularly when I read some of the transcripts of the testimony of Hiss and Chambers before the House Committee, at how preposterous Hiss's testimony was. It was just so clear.

NR: So the book convinced you?
Imus: Yes, and then I went back and read *Perjury* [by Allen Weinstein]. At the end of that, Weinstein delineates all of these conspiracy theories advanced by Hiss's defenders, and it reminded me of that bulls—t that Johnnie Cochran came up with for O. J. Simpson.

NR: What do you think the rest of the media think?
Imus: Well, I got to talking to friends of mine about it—people like Jeff Greenfield, Mike Wallace, and Frank Rich, people who I suspected probably thought Alger Hiss was innocent. But I was really surprised at how many people now realize that Hiss was obviously guilty.

NR: You liked the Tanenhaus book. In your mind is it National Book Award material?
Imus: Yeah, but I told Sam I thought there was no way he was going to win. [As it turns out, Tanenhaus didn't win.] I just didn't think the people who were voting for a National Book Award were going to vote for anything that had to do with Whittaker Chambers.

NR: So, some people still haven't given up?
Imus: Right. Perhaps you remember when Tony Lake was before the Senate Committee trying to be confirmed as the director of the CIA. Somebody asked him, essentially, "Do you think Alger Hiss was a Soviet spy?" and he said he didn't think that had ever really been proved. That's just idiotic.

NR: You were raised in Arizona, and you have a very strong Western strain of individualism. Do you identify with Chambers's love for the farm life?
Imus: Well, I don't have the same aversion to city life that he did. But we have a ranch out there, and we go out there quite a bit. I'm not as affected by it as he was—but, then again, I probably have a better deal all around than he had.

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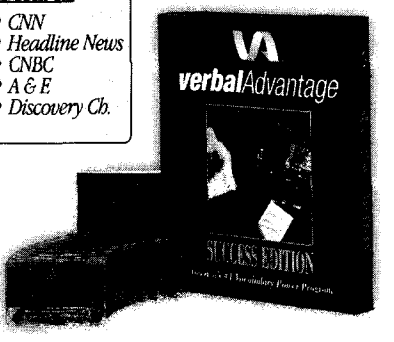

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—W. H. VON DREELE

IMF's rescue of Mexico offered encouragement to loose lending practices in Asia.

There is another legitimate reason to oppose the bailout, which is that the IMF's *modus operandi* is to depress economic growth by forcing tax hikes and other anti-growth measures upon foreign economies. This is what prompts Kemp's opposition. Kemp places too much emphasis on the supply-side *idée fixe* of fixed exchange rates. But trade is the lifeblood of the international economy, and it needs a functioning circulatory system, which means sound money. The Asian governments will get their economies back on track once they embrace the Reaganite reforms of currency stability, tax reduction, deregulation, and expanded free trade.

The current implosion was the Asian Tigers' own doing. State-directed crony capitalism does not work; free-market entrepreneurial capitalism does. Lavish IMF solutions that even partially bail out reckless international lenders are wrong, as are the job-crippling high tax rates that have often accompanied them in the past. But the GOP must make the grounds of its opposition to the bailout clear. This crisis is not an indictment of free trade, nor is it a reason for America to stick its head in the sand—even if Pat Buchanan is having an awfully good time.

Break the Date

PRESIDENT Clinton's Christmas visit to U.S. troops in Bosnia was a nice gesture, but it only called attention to a policy that is going nowhere. It has been a policy of self-imposed and then-ignored deadlines for U.S. withdrawal, and "mission creep" committing the troops to unattainable political objectives while they are still in place.

NR consistently opposed the deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia. But we supported the Dayton truce, partly because it seemed that it would lead to partition, the only viable long-term solution, and partly because the Administration pledged to train and equip the Bosnians to defend themselves. This logic still holds.

The fact that U.S. troops remain there, however, poses a dilemma for Republicans. The most extreme congressional sanction—a cut-off of funds by a date certain—recalls the tactics used by a McGovernite Congress over Vietnam, which undermined a fragile truce and guaranteed the collapse of American policy. In Bosnia, the best American strategy is a controlled withdrawal enabling others to take up the burden and avoiding a bloody chaos which (note well) the Iranians will exploit.

Already three-quarters of the peacekeeping troops in Bosnia are European; further U.S. reductions are quite feasible. Meanwhile, the Administration owes it to Congress to fulfill its pledge to train and equip the Bosnians, which it has not done adequately. Congress should put consistent pressure on the President, while ceding him flexibility on timing if he is clearly moving in the right direction.

Brendan Gill, R I P

AFTER graduating from Yale in 1936, Brendan Gill signed on at Harold Ross's *New Yorker* and remained connected with it for the rest of his life. By 1936 *The New Yorker* had more or less perfected its style of cosmopolitan sophistication, for which its "ideal reader," the little old lady in Dubuque, supposedly longed, and perhaps did. The staff Gill joined included such luminaries as E. B. White, James Thurber, Robert Benchley, and Dorothy Parker, as well as the brilliant cartoonists Peter Arno, Charles Addams, Helen Hokinson, and Steinberg of the wiggly lines. Yet Gill in his way stood out. He was assimilable to the *New Yorker* style, but he knew more than most of his colleagues and had interests beyond his "Talk of the Town" feature. His style was a perfection of lightly held but formidable erudition; some of what he produced almost certainly will outlive the works of the Algonquin Roundtable wits.

Mr. Gill was also an energetic leader in the movement, successful after 1968, to preserve outstanding examples of New York City's architectural heritage. He was largely responsible for preventing Grand Central Terminal from going the way of Penn Station. Mr. Gill knew that the architecture of Manhattan is one of the wonders of the world, its skyline that of a great imperial city like Rome, Alexandria, Paris, or London, surpassing in its magic the hanging gardens of Babylon or the Colossus of Rhodes. In his invaluable preservationist activities he set a useful limit to the destroy/create process of capitalism, short-term interest giving way to long-term value.

Coming of intellectual age during the Depression, Mr. Gill was a New Deal liberal, often Colonel Blimpishly so, as when he rather loudly referred to the Reagan–Bush era as "years in which so many of my notions of social justice, incorporated into law over the past half-century . . . have

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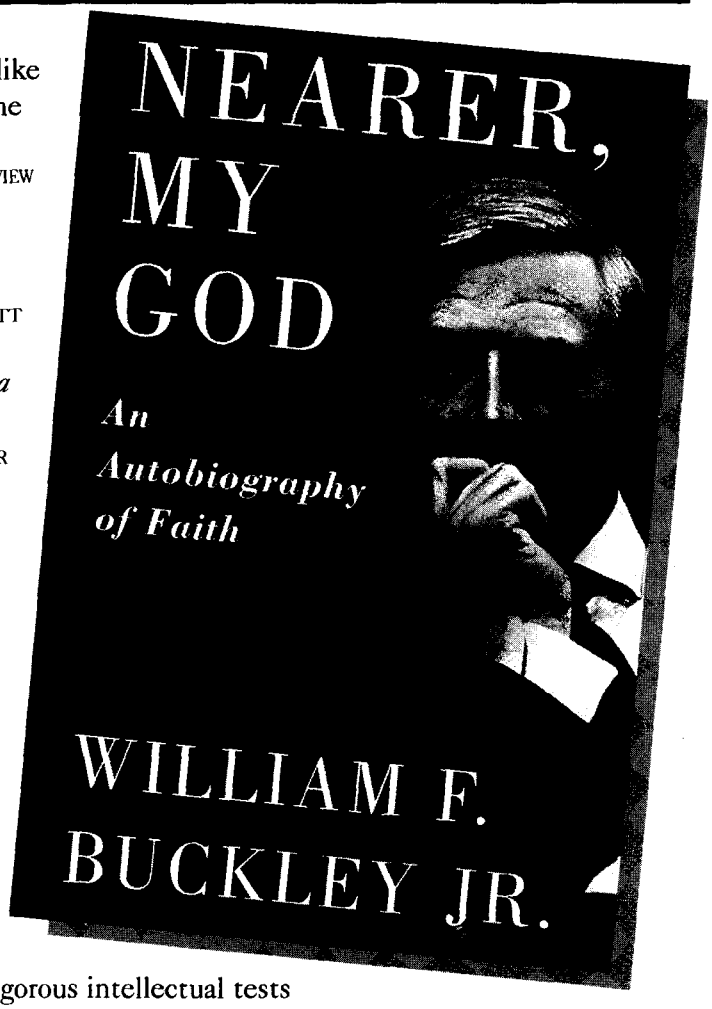

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—Lance Morrow

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—Michael Pankenham

"Buckley has never made a secret of his strong Christian faith, yet he confesses to a temperamental reticence. 'I am not trained in the devotional mode, nor disposed to it' he writes—nor, one might add, the evangelical mode. That is precisely what makes his new book unique . . ."
—Books & Culture

"This work is vintage Buckley: opinionated, articulate, moving, self-righteous, maddening, and elitist but never boring."
—Library Journal

"The philosophical and theological apologetics works in its own framework, but the personal part for me works a whole lot better. It makes the book a Christian classic, something I can give to students to say, here is Christianity, not as a matter of theory or doctrine, but as a living religion. Here he has taught that lesson in a book."
—Professor Jacob Neusner

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been reduced to impotence." Well, every man, as Ezra Pound once said, deserves to have his ideas tested one at a time. Brendan Gill was indeed a man of letters, profoundly wise about much in the tradition of New York, and by all accounts a splendid gentleman.

NOTES & ASIDES

Charles Wallen, R I P

MOST of our friends aren't listed in directories that record eminence. When the loss is of a public figure, public attention is expected, and obituaries are published and read. But of course the pain is no less when the death is that of a personal and private friend. Then there is no catharsis, no public or semi-public mourning, no public tributes. The consolation, in this corner of NATIONAL REVIEW, is the accessibility of this page. I have treated it, over the years, most exploitatively—as something akin to personal property; yet always aware that its longevity depends entirely on its capacity to engage your interest. From time to time I use my half-acre of space to recall a friendship purely personal, as I do now, on learning of the death of Charles Wallen Jr.

Three days after he died I had a letter from Bill Gillen, of Novato, California, whom I've never met. He wrote of his own grief and added, "I am writing to you because I know you were his best friend, and I know that because he told me so in his last letter."

It was so, I am honored to reflect. Charles died at 77 in San Mateo, just out from San Francisco; silver-haired, slightly stooped, quick to laugh and smile, engrossed in whatever book he was reading. When did we meet?

> I was thinking this morning about one of your trips to San Francisco in 1971 . . . 26 years ago. I had joined you in your suite at the St. Francis Hotel and you had been engaged to speak before a meeting of Bank of America employees and there were several hundred of them there. . . . Then we went on to Trader Vic's and had a happy lunch. Memories—memories—you have provided me with so many happy memories over the years.

Charles Wallen was a purebred American whose interests were books, letters, and friends. He spent the great body of his time reading and rereading his books, which he stored in the huge cellar in his house in Millbrae, overlooking the airport at San Francisco and the surrounding hills and mountains. He was born in Tennessee, wandered about the country, and settled down for most of his professional life in San Francisco as a minor executive in a trucking company. His friends never knew what exactly he did for the DiSalvo Company, and we assumed, I'd guess correctly, that DiSalvo was not much more for him than the office where he worked to provide for his wife and three sons and to gain the leisure time to read his books and write his letters to his friends.

He wrote tenaciously, but I have to suppose that he wrote most often to me, as the laws of time & space make it unlikely that there are others who received two or three letters from Charles Wallen every week for 27 years. And this on top of the memoirs he began a few years ago. "The narrative goes on now way beyond the 1,214,000 words I mentioned to you last month . . ." That would be about three times the length of *Gone with the Wind*.

Who did he write to? Everyone who interested him or caught his attention.

> I have just bought a copy of Father Patrick Samway's (S.J.) biography of Walker Percy. He mentions you on pages 302 and 303. I watched that *Firing Line* with Walker and Eudora Welty. I started writing to Walker in 1980 and we corresponded till his death in 1990. Once he sent me his privately published little book *Bourbon*, which is hilarious. What a blow he dealt to the 1960s with *Love in the Ruins*.

The Walker Percys of this world (as if they were a breed) don't maintain correspondence with listless minds or boring writers. It was so with others, some of whom I had introduced Charles to.

> Got a note from Tom Wolfe last week. He said he was doing OK. Also am rereading David Niven's two autobiographical works and enjoying them. We corresponded from 1972 when I met him with you until his death. He called me on his last trip to SF . . .
>
> [Again:] I carried on some correspondence with [Malcolm] Muggeridge in the '70s and '80s & I think I have all his books . . .
>
> [A week or two later:] . . . Got a note from Tom Wolfe last week. He said he was doing OK.

He sometimes circulated answers elicited by his letter-writing, even when one such left him bloody. He was well and truly zonked by the fearful Hugh Kenner's reply to his complaint about my use of a word:

> I looked in your *Right Word* book for *solipsism* first & found it on page 427. In April 1973 Hugh Kenner wrote me about this word. You had written me that if I could find a substitute you would stop using it. Part of Hugh's letter: "Dear Charles:
>
> ". . . But Bill's point is precisely that there is no substitute for 'solipsism.' If what pains you about it is simply the fact that you seldom hear it, then the fault is not in the man who grinds it against your ears, but in the millions of part-time and largely inadvertent solipsists who are so convinced the universe emanates from them that they feel no need of a word to designate such a condition. Fish, on the same principle, know nothing of water, and for aqueous terminology you should not apply to a fish."

Hugh Kenner, having gone this far, did not stop, and Charles, though presumably chastened, did not mute the full thunder of the closing lines:

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"If on the other hand your ears are assaulted by its impacted sibilants (as the ears of Tennyson were aggrieved by the word 'scissors') then I can only fetch you the cold comfort that for a graceless condition the wisdom inherent in the language has afforded us a graceless word. And if, finally, your grievance is that Bill uses it too often, then I can only tax you with inconsistency, since you report that after one to two years of not hearing it from his lips you were wounded anew by a single occurrence—perhaps, I will grant, on the principle of a man who has been sensitized to penicillin. Such a man's comfort should be that others need the remedy that inflames him, and that principle I commend to you. Hugh Kenner."

Charles loved it. Stylistic grace enlivened him, though his taste was not for the rococo, but for witty plain-spokenness. His own literary opinions were emphatic.

In the [San Francisco] *Chronicle* this morning we had the story of the death of William Burroughs. Patricia Holt [the book editor] writes of it on the front page and mentions Allen Ginsberg, his former lover, as well as Richard Brautigan & Kurt Vonnegut. Happily I have only an embroidered recollection of them. I would not trade Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* for the whole lot. Will they be remembered? I doubt it . . . I am so shocked by some of the revelations of Pamela [Harriman] that I can scarcely lay the book down.

Charles's health problems were recurrent, but he was fatalistic. He had been an alcoholic, he once told me, but he had quit drinking before I met him and seemed entirely indifferent to the absence of wine. But he persevered with his small cigars, and was amused by medical proscriptions . . .

Bill: I noticed some other things the health freaks forbid: STEAK, EGGS, SALT-CURED COUNTRY HAM, SUGAR, TEA, COFFEE, COCA-COLA, BACON—so watch out for these dangerous items. My cousin Joe Wallen of Johnson City, Tennessee, about every 3 months sends me a good supply of SALT-CURED COUNTRY HAM and several packages of GRITS. When I was growing up at Kyles Ford, Tennessee, my father raised Poland China hogs—they were enormous . . . in the 600-pound bracket. Hog-killing was a day I dreaded but we had the year round plenty of SALT-CURED COUNTRY HAM.

Tom Wendel, a historian and friend, recently examined the subterranean library. Charles, he reported, had an ampler store of Mark Twain than anyone else this side of a public library. The Tennessee of the young Charles was Deep South country, where his cultural memories germinated.

Going through some of my old family papers I was reminded that my mother's family had slaves, and several of them (after they were freed in 1863) elected to stay on at my grandfather's farm and were still there when Mama was married in 1900. My paternal grandfather's family also owned slaves. One was sold in 1850 for $800.00. But I probably have told you this before. [He hadn't. But now his mind turned, as so often it did, to his endless thankfulness

for all that went well.] . . . Not a day passes that I do not think of all the things you have done for me over the last 27 years. I am grateful.

Perhaps the Southern culture had something to do with his rooted devotion to his family, to the pleasures of literature, and the benefactions of his friends. I gave him a puppy years ago, a Cavalier King Charles whom he named Tres.

I sent them [his cousins] a picture of you, me, and Tres taken in January 1983 . . . only three months after you sent me Tres on 8 October 1982. This was the most precious gift of my life. Tres has been gone to Heaven 43 months and 9 days today.

His sadness over the dog's death ("the doggie's death," I'd have phrased it if talking to Charles) was severe. He had his melancholy moments, and I mentioned them once, in talking with him.

You quote Chesterton on page 158 [of my book, *Nearer, My God*] that despair is a sin, and years ago you quoted that to me when I came by the Hilton Hotel at the airport at 7 A.M. to pick you up. I was down . . . and then you cheered me up . . . I never thought of despair again.

There was never a favor done to Charles that was unremembered, uncelebrated. A few weeks ago he dispatched a handwritten note to Frances Bronson in my office. "I still love you, Frances, and will never forget your taking me to Paone's for lunch in 1971, 26 years ago, and you picked up the check. You are a darling. Regards, Charles."

THE above are fragments from mail received from him in the past three months. It would be a vigorous semester's work to go through the bank of letters I have from him. He maintained in so many of them a metrical cadence that rang through with Biblical lyricism. As in the final sentence of one letter a fortnight ago when he spoke of a projected visit sometime in the near future. You must come, he said. "We will sit out on the porch and discuss with light frivolity the meaning of glimpses dimly seen as in twilight." RIP, Charles Wallen, 1920–1997. **—WFB**

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CAPITAL SCENE

State of the Unions

STEPHEN SILBIGER

Roman Genn

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SOME elected officials campaign in order to hold office. Others hold office in order to campaign. President Clinton falls firmly into the latter category. So firmly that even as he begins to fade into lame-duck status, his Administration's policies will once again be determined by the imperatives of a presidential campaign—Al Gore's. It is the political needs of Clinton's Vice President—the primaries he needs to win, and particularly the unions he needs to woo—that provide the best guide to the policies about to be unveiled in the President's State of the Union address.

More than personal friendship inspires Clinton's effort on behalf of his Vice President. If Clinton turns the White House over to Gore, he will be the first Democratic President since Andrew Jackson—apart from those who died in office—to be succeeded by a member of his own party. Clinton would understandably see this as a confirmation of his political skills and one last, vicarious chance to enjoy the adoration of the American electorate. But just as important in his calculations must be the fact that a Gore presidency would secure a friendly Justice Department as far as the eye can see.

Getting Gore elected won't be easy, despite the formidable advantages of his current office. Neither Iowa nor New Hampshire—the crucial early caucus and primary states—is favorable territory for the Vice President.

In Iowa, Dick Gephardt, the winner of the 1988 caucus there, will have the aid of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Machinists union, the two strongest unions in the state. Neither union relishes the idea of cheap competition from overseas, and both of them dislike Gore for his support of NAFTA and fast track. The UAW and the Machinists are closely allied (indeed, along with the Steelworkers, they are set to merge in 2000), but it is the UAW that is the more formidable force—and particularly friendly toward Gephardt, going back to the Chrysler bailout in 1980. In New Hampshire, meanwhile, the primary electorate has never been kind to Democratic front-runners (Mondale lost there in 1984, and Muskie almost did the same in 1972).

Thus, the political imperative for Gore is to build a fire wall in the South and in the big early-primary states of Illinois and New York. President Clinton is already helping to build it. To secure the South, the White House must concentrate on blacks and the National Education Association (NEA). Clinton is, therefore, locked into a rigid defense of racial preferences. If he were seen as wavering on that issue, he would be inviting a Jesse Jackson candidacy; and if that occurred, Al Gore's Southern fire wall would leave him trapped in an inferno.

As for the NEA, it is the only union with any clout in the right-to-work states of the Old Confederacy. This union, which has a great stake in the decisions of state and local governments, has developed a first-class political machine. Clinton–Gore strategists surely know that the NEA's endorsement of a little-known governor from Georgia in exchange for a promise to create a Department of Education was one of the major factors in the nomination of Jimmy Carter. To secure the NEA, Clinton must vigorously oppose school choice and push for increased federal aid for education. (Increased education spending might also help win the support of big-city mayors and—if some of it is earmarked for school construction—of building-trade unions in the North.)

If Gore is able to hold his native South on Super Tuesday, he will then have to face down his rivals in New York and Illinois. He will be vulnerable on his left in New York. In Illinois as in Iowa, Gephardt will have the support of the industrial unions—and they dominate Illinois labor outside of Chicago. Moreover, southern Illinois still has a substantial United Mine Worker (UMW) presence. The UMW is dwindling in numbers—coal-mining isn't exactly a growth industry—but devotion to the union is part of the culture of the area. And the UMW distrusts Gore, whose environmental policies threaten its very existence. (UMW president Cecil Roberts has already made disparaging comments about the Vice President.)

TO counter Gephardt's strength in Illinois and Gore's weakness in New York, the White House needs the support of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which have substantial memberships in both states. AFSCME is particularly important to Gore's hopes. The head of AFSCME in Illinois has built a formidable political operation—so formidable that Republican Gov. Jim Edgar had to give them a generous new pension deal. In New York, the machine built by Victor Gotbaum, the former head of AFSCME in New York City, is the most sophisticated labor operation in the nation and is critical to turning out the minority vote. As for the SEIU, it is about to affiliate with

Mr. Silbiger was the associate director of legislation for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees from 1980 to 1988.

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the hundred-thousand-strong hospital workers' union in New York City headed by Dennis Rivera, a key player in the Big Apple's growing Hispanic community.

Neither union has a history of smooth relations with Gore. The SEIU is dominated by New Left and peace activists turned off by Gore's run as a moderate in 1988. The AFSCME leadership, though less ideological, has distrusted Gore ever since he voted for the Balanced Budget Amendment in the Senate in 1986. AFSCME saw the amendment as a threat to federal spending on programs that aid the state and local governments that employ its members. Hence, neither AFSCME nor the SEIU will be ready to go all out for Gore on the basis of promises alone.

Clinton—with a wink to these unions—said recently that he hasn't given up on his goal of a federal takeover of the health-care industry.

Their support will have to be won with deeds—and Clinton is already at it. He has appointed the president of AFSCME, Gerry McEntee, and the secretary-treasurer of the SEIU, Betty Bednarczyk, to the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry. Both unions have a substantial portion of their membership in the health-care industry. And both see the managed care that forces hospitals to reduce their costs as a direct threat to their members. So, under the guise of consumer protection, they are lobbying for more mandated medical services and longer hospital stays. President Clinton has obliged them, not only with the commission appointments, but also with his endorsement, in a press conference on November 20, of a "Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights."

Both unions favor the "Bill of Rights" as a prelude to a government takeover of health care. AFSCME in particular—which has a rich national treasury—helped fund the Democratic National Committee's campaign for the Clinton health-care plan in 1993 and paid for several bus caravans of activists to go to Washington. Clinton—with a clear wink to these unions—said recently that he hasn't given up on his goal of a federal takeover of the health-care industry, hoping "to keep nibbling away."

Clinton's new initiative on child care fits right into his union strategy. Women are a majority in both AFSCME and the SEIU, and both unions have ardent feminists in their ranks, whom the male leadership always tries to placate (in internal union elections, turnout tends to be low, and therefore interest-group support is particularly important). In the 1980s, AFSCME spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on (unsuccessful) "pay equity" lawsuits against various states and cities, claiming that female-dominated job classifications were lower-paying than male-dominated ones and hence that these governments were in violation of civil-rights laws. The SEIU, meanwhile, played to the feminists by devoting enormous resources to lobbying on behalf of the Family Leave Act, even though most of its members worked for employers who already offered leave benefits similar to those mandated by the act.

Lobbying for increased child-care spending is a way for the unions at one and the same time to appeal to feminists, address what they think is a genuine need of their workers—and create jobs for potential dues-paying members at new child-care centers funded by federal aid. That's why the unions have developed such a close relationship with Marian Wright Edelman, the head of the Children's Defense Fund and the doyenne of the inside-the-Beltway Left. Mrs. Edelman is no fan of Al Gore, who urged President Clinton to sign the 1996 welfare bill she vehemently opposed. A new Clinton child-care initiative could help win over AFSCME and the SEIU, while at the same time softening Mrs. Edelman's opposition to Mr. Gore.

The problem for the Vice President is that playing to the union Left just doesn't come naturally to him. He has never connected well with working-class crowds, partly because of his pedigree (and his schooling at St. Albans and Harvard), partly because the state he represented for years in the House and Senate, Tennessee, has little union presence. There does happen to be a strong, predominantly black AFSCME local in Memphis. But its political relationship was with former Sen. Jim Sasser—never with Gore. So the Vice President needs all the help he can get.

The Clinton Administration recently has been mulling over the possibility of issuing an executive order that would favor unionized firms in bids for federal contracts. To whom did Mr. Clinton give the responsibility for handling this potential valentine to the unions? None other than Al Gore. □

Raise the Roof

LAWRENCE KUDLOW & STEPHEN MOORE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHAT ever happened to the Reagan Democrats? These socially conservative working families, with incomes ranging from $30,000 to $50,000 per year, who make up 27 per cent of the electorate, powered the Gipper to landslides in 1980 and 1984, giving him 59 per cent of their vote. In 1988 they stayed with George Bush, giving him 56 per cent of their vote. In the Nineties, however, Republican presidential tickets appealed to an average of only 36 per cent of Middle America. These folks walked away from Bush and Dole, as the GOP was trounced by Bill Clinton.

Pollster John Zogby, the most accurate presidential predictor in recent years, puts it bluntly: "Middle America is the critical heartland. You can't win a national election without this voting bloc." When it comes to tax policy, recent Republican presidential candidates have ignored the heartland. Since the sweeping Reagan tax-rate cuts of 1981 and 1986, the GOP has done little to the direct benefit of middle-class pocketbooks. As a result, whereas Republicans used to get high marks on the tax issue, now Democrats are seen by middle-income voters as just as good or even better.

Mr. Kudlow, chief economist at American Skandia Marketing, and Mr. Moore, director of fiscal-policy studies at the Cato Institute, are both NR *contributing editors.*

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In tax politics, push comes to shove in the 15 and 28 per cent brackets. Here's the problem. Consider someone who was earning $25,000 a year in 1986 and was in the 15 per cent bracket. Say that person is still employed and has received an average annual raise of 3 per cent (above inflation). He or she would now be earning $48,108. However, this prospering job-holder has been bumped up from the 15 to the 28 per cent bracket. So instead of keeping 85 cents for every additional dollar earned, the taxpayer receives only 72 cents. This amounts to a 15 per cent tax penalty on success. Call it real-income bracket creep. It's enough to make a middle-class wage-earner switch political parties.

Instead of targeted tax credits for some, why not borrow a page from President Reagan's script and propose rate reduction for all?

What's more, our hard-working member of the silent majority has also faced steady increases in Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes over the past decade. Together, the payroll taxes alone now impose a 15.3 per cent burden. Thus, the benefits of the Reagan income-tax cuts have been canceled out, nearly dollar for dollar, by hikes in the regressive payroll tax. For the owner-operators of small businesses—really the working backbone of the nation—their 43.3 per cent combined marginal tax rate (28 per cent on income and 15.3 per cent payroll) exceeds the 42.5 per cent rate paid by those in the top bracket (i.e., those who make over $250,000). That should be no one's definition of fairness.

Rep. Dick Armey (R., Tex.) has called this plight of American workers "the middle-class squeeze." That is exactly the right diagnosis. But what is the Republican Congress doing about it? Last year it passed a tax cut only about one-third as large as Republicans had promised in the 1994 Contract with America. Families with young children and investors with market profits got some relief. But there are millions of middle-class taxpayers without kids at home and without capital gains; they will angrily learn, come April 15, that they got essentially nothing out of the 1997 tax bill.

This year Reps. David McIntosh (R., Ind.) and John Kasich (R., Ohio) propose to end the marriage tax penalty by allowing married couples to file their taxes separately. This would provide tax relief to 15 million households, at a cost of nearly $20 billion a year. But what about unmarried taxpayers? Where is their relief? Instead of targeted tax credits for some, why not borrow a page from President Reagan's script and propose an across-the-board rate reduction for all?

Until the GOP makes a decision on big-bang tax simplification, it could bolster its credibility and reconnect with *all* middle-class taxpayers by raising the income ceiling on the 15 per cent tax bracket. Under current law the 28 per cent bracket creeps up on single workers at $25,350 and on married couples at $42,350. The 15 per cent bracket should be stretched to $35,000 for singles and $50,000 for couples. Eventually the ceiling for couples should be raised all the way to $65,000—the income level where people stop paying payroll taxes. Of course, this also implies a future increase in the income ceiling for the 28 per cent bracket.

Internal Revenue statistics indicate that there are 21 million households with incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 a year. This plan would provide tax relief of roughly $800 in the first year for single and married filers, with more relief coming later as the plan is expanded. Effectively, this approach provides simple marginal-tax-rate relief. Those earning lower middle incomes would remain in the 15 per cent bracket. Those earning average middle incomes would remain in the 28 per cent bracket (some might even drop back to 15 per cent). Tax-bracket creep would be eliminated—without any gimmicks, targets, loopholes, or complexities.

The latest Treasury Department numbers on federal spending and revenues show a budget surplus over the past 12 calendar months. Based on the first two months of fiscal year 1998 (October and November), this year could produce a $75-billion surplus, which would be enough to pay for the proposed tax plan. Unbelievable as it may sound, our zero-inflation, high-tech information economy is powering the nation into an era of surplus politics. Now it is up to the Republican Congress to invest every nickel and dime of these surpluses in broad-based tax relief—especially for the middle class. These are the people who gave the Republicans their majority in Congress. And as the last two presidential elections demonstrated, they are the ones who could take it away. □

Heir to the Throne

JOHN J. MILLER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

"I KNEW Martin Luther King Jr.," declared an irate Rep. John Lewis (D., Ga.) on the House floor last November. "He was my mentor, my friend, and my leader. If he were alive today, he would be ashamed of what his niece did and said." Nothing excites a member of the Congressional Black Caucus like a conservative invoking Dr. King's name. But here was something even worse: King's own flesh and blood deviating from Democratic orthodoxy, as defined by Rep. Lewis.

Alveda King is not only the niece of the late civil-rights leader—as close to royalty as you can get in the black community—she is a registered Democrat. But in recent months, she has become a fixture at conservative press conferences and political rallies in Washington, D.C., and around the country. On this particular occasion, she had annoyed Rep. Lewis with her outspoken support of a bi-partisan school-choice bill—but any number of her positions might have angered him.

Alveda King, who bears a passing resemblance to her uncle, is strongly pro-life, opposes preferential legislation for gays, and recently endorsed a bill by Rep. Charles Canady (R., Fla.) to restrict the Federal Government's use of

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racial preferences. Last August, the 47-year-old Miss King became a senior fellow at the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution, a free-market think tank based in Arlington, Va., where she focuses on promoting school choice.

She stands as a symbol of the attractiveness of conservatism to black Americans—but also of its limits. Alveda King is hardly the next J. C. Watts. "I'm not a liberal or a conservative," admits Miss King, who lives in Atlanta and teaches at Atlanta Metropolitan College. "I reject those labels. I'm just an advocate for families and children."

Paul Steidler, a colleague at the Tocqueville Institution agrees: "It's difficult to categorize her politically."

Indeed, last March she participated in a demonstration outside the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Va., to denounce the CIA's supposed involvement in selling drugs to inner-city blacks. Inspired by a series of articles in the *San Jose Mercury News*—which had been discredited long before this particular gathering—the protestors threatened a national consumer boycott unless the CIA released incriminating documents and Congress agreed to hold hearings. "The CIA says it didn't do anything wrong, but they know the truth," Miss King said in a recent interview.

On this subject, Alveda King sounds like one of the more paranoid members of the Black Caucus. In a strange way, this may be related to her budding conservatism. It's not a conservatism gleaned from the pages of Russell Kirk; instead, it emanates from the grassroots, churchgoing black community, which harbors a deep suspicion of all American institutions—from the CIA to the public schools.

Alveda King first became involved in politics through her family. She marched for civil rights, and suffered through the fire-bombing of her home in 1963, the assassination of her uncle in 1968, and the death nine months later of her father, the Rev. A. D. King, under suspicious circumstances (he was found dead in a swimming pool, but there was no water in his lungs). Miss King was elected to the Georgia state legislature in 1978, where she served for two terms, working on the education committee and opposing the feminist Equal Rights Amendment. In 1984, she ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in Georgia's 5th Congressional District.

Although she failed to win the nomination, she did earn a few national headlines for dressing down Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, who had privately encouraged her to quit pursuing the nomination, spend more time with her family—and think about becoming an office manager for her opponent. When she accused him of chauvinism, he shot back that her father and uncle were "male chauvinist pigs, too." Miss King went public with the story, and Mayor Young had to apologize.

At about the same time, Miss King began to speak openly of her personal experience with abortion. "One day I just started talking to the students in my class about what I had done," she says. In fact, she had had an abortion shortly after the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision. "I was victimized by the law, and I didn't fully appreciate it until I was pregnant again." In 1976, she saw a sonogram of her unborn son Eddie, who is now twenty years old. "That made me come to grips with the issue," she says. (She today has six children, from two marriages, and three grandchildren). "Abortion is always wrong."

'I think school choice is the primary civil-rights issue of the 1990s,' she says. And it makes a big difference when someone with the King name utters those words.

Alveda King might never have found a national platform if she had not known Art Rocker. Over the years, Mr. Rocker has served as a fundraiser and strategist for both Democrats and Republicans. He supported John Lewis in his successful bid for Congress in 1986, for example, and another Georgia Democrat, Cynthia McKinney, in her 1992 election. But he became disenchanted with their liberal politics and turned to Alan Keyes, urging him to run for the Republican presidential nomination.

"I wanted to bring black people to Alan's ideology, and I thought his campaign was a good vehicle for doing that," says Rocker, who was disappointed when Keyes was not able to develop much appeal among black voters. So he looked to Alveda King. Rocker also drew upon the dozens of Republican political contacts he had made during the Keyes campaign.

He arranged a meeting in Georgia with House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Gingrich's staff in turn contacted the Center for New Black Leadership, a Washington-based organization dedicated to amplifying the voice of black conservatives. Last May, Gerald A. Reynolds, the Center's president, brought Miss King to Washington and introduced her to conservatives around town. "I was stunned to learn that a member of the King family might actually be on our side," recalls Reynolds. "She's been an important ally for many months now."

Indeed, she has been an irrepressible activist. She spoke to the New Jersey Committee for Life in September. She traveled to the West Coast to campaign against a gay-rights initiative in the state of Washington and a gay-rights bill in the California Assembly. She helped conservatives build bridges with black church leaders in both places, and argued that the civil-rights movement for blacks was fundamentally different from the drive for preferential treatment for gays.

Miss King's chief passion, however, is school choice. "I think school choice is the primary civil-rights issue of the 1990s," she says. And it makes a big difference when somebody with the King name utters these words. For many years conservatives have viewed school choice as not only good public policy but also as a way to make inroads among black voters. Alveda King's backing, they believe, represents a tremendous political opportunity—one they intend to seize.

On a recent trip to Michigan, where she promoted a school-choice plan drafted by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Miss King introduced conservatives to black church leaders in Detroit for the first time. She also generated an enormous amount of publicity. "I'm holding a big stack of articles and editorials in my hand," says Joseph Lehman, communications director for the Mackinac Center. His favorite headline appeared in the *Midland Daily News*: "KING: SCHOOLS OF CHOICE A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE." Says Lehman, "You can't *buy* a headline that good." □

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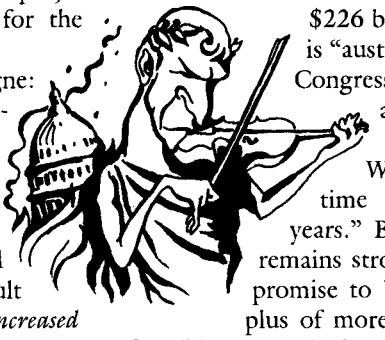
BREAD & CIRCUSES

LAST January when lawmakers returned to Washington, they faced a budget deficit of $124 billion and talked of little but the need to cut spending in order to balance the books. This year they are returning to Surplus City. The strong economy brought in more tax revenues and lowered social spending, producing a deficit of a mere $23 billion for fiscal year 1997 (which ended September 30) and a projected budget surplus for FY98 for the first time in thirty years.



But hold the champagne: this is *not* good news. Forget every GOP sound-bite you've ever heard about the imperative of balancing the budget—even when Washington was obsessed about the deficit, the result was a budget deal that *increased* government spending as a percentage of GDP and created five new entitlements. If a bankrupt Beltway was so inhospitable to small-government conservatives, Surplus City will be a town without pity.

Indeed, if anything has been sinking faster than the deficit, it is the politicians' commitment to fiscal restraint. When Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, the federal budget was $1.46 trillion. The budget for FY98 is $1.7 trillion. Non-entitlement domestic spending for FY98 is increasing by $22.6 billion, four times the rate of inflation and the largest increase in eight years.

As the Cato Institute's Steve Moore reminds us, programs which Republicans slated for deep cuts or flat-out elimination just two years ago have enjoyed boosts in funding. Confronted with a sea of red ink, Congress still increased spending for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the World Bank, Goals 2000, bilingual education, and the Legal Services Corporation. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program was created by Jimmy Carter and targeted for elimination by Ronald Reagan, but, having survived, it received a 20 per cent increase from the GOP Congress.

What will happen now that the "restraint" imposed by the deficit has disappeared? The *Washington Post* reports that President Clinton, for his part, plans to increase social spending because his constituencies have been starved by his rigorous belt-tightening—"three years in which Clinton has nearly matched Republicans in their zeal for fiscal austerity." (Washington is a parallel universe where a budget increase of $226 billion over five years is "austerity.")

Congress last year did manage to curtail spending on Medicare in Washington's favorite time zone—the "out years." But, if the economy remains strong, the "out years" promise to bring a budget surplus of more than $100 billion. This is more bad news.

Michael Horowitz, a Reagan budget official now at the Hudson Institute, considers the recent deficit-ridden past as the high-water mark for fiscal discipline. "Entitlement reforms and discretionary spending restraint seemed possible under conditions Republicans had created," he explains. Horowitz believes that Congress and the Administration would have reached agreement on structural reform of Medicare if the Congressional Budget Office hadn't discovered an extra $45 billion in the midst of the budget negotiations last spring. "Now the free-lunch theories of both parties are possible—Congress can raise spending *and* cut taxes," Horowitz declares.

Larry Kudlow, who also served in the Reagan budget office, agrees. Because "the good economy buys them revenues and so buys them time," Kudlow thinks the temptation will be to ignore the problems that aging baby boomers will pose for retirement programs.

The problem is that when eliminating the deficit became the GOP's Holy Grail, the party conveniently abandoned arguments about reducing government in order to promote freedom. The deficit arguments were much easier to make than the freedom arguments, and even got a respectful hearing in places like the *Washington Post*.

Hence Republicans will be defenseless against Clinton's spending plans now that Washington can "afford" them. Some Republicans will try to dedicate part of any surplus to paying down the debt—a way to continue deficit politics by other means. But they will find that their abstract goal is no match for spending schemes on behalf of kids and post-kids, the elderly and the near-elderly.

THE best way to combat new spending is by proposing tax relief. The surplus, after all, is not really of Washington's making—so it shouldn't be Washington's to spend. Over the past 15 years, tax revenues have, on average, increased 7 per cent a year. In October and November 1997, revenues were up by 10.5 per cent. Even a 7 per cent growth rate would yield a surplus of $300 billion in 2002—if the money was not spent first.

This extraordinary revenue growth is the fallout from Reagan's tax cuts. Indeed, Washington's black ink is really the "Reagan surplus" (certainly a better way to memorialize Reagan than that new federal office building in downtown Washington). The economy has essentially been growing since 1982, and the end of the Cold War made deep cuts in defense spending possible (though not prudent).

Republicans will have to agree on an attractive tax-reduction plan—like the one Messrs. Kudlow and Moore propose in this issue—to thwart a bi-partisan majority in favor of new spending. The green eyeshades always ask how a tax cut is going to be "financed." In this case, from a) the surplus that hardworking Americans have provided; and b) spending cuts to reduce the overall size of government.

At least one veteran Reaganite lawmaker hasn't been co-opted by the obsession with the deficit. Rep. Bill Archer (R., Tex.), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, recently told the *New York Times*, "I'm not a conservative because I believe in a balanced budget. I'm a conservative because I believe that a smaller government with less power means greater freedom and more opportunity for the American people."

Well said. But in Surplus City, Bill Archer is likely to be lonelier than ever.

—KATE O'BEIRNE

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MULTIPOLAR BEAR

Russian Roulette

Moscow is developing a new rallying cry: Rogue states of the world, unite.

CHANDLER ROSENBERGER

SIX years ago, Yevgeny Primakov, then a special envoy of Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, made his first foray onto the international stage. He arrived in Baghdad on the eve of the first Western attack in the Gulf War, hoping to avert hostilities at the last minute—and thus unravel President Bush's careful diplomacy. Primakov worked so hard at this that—like CNN's Bernard Shaw—he was in the Iraqi capital when the bombs began to fall and had to be hustled out of the country, peace proposals in hand.

That was then; this is now. When in October Saddam Hussein expelled the American members of a UN arms-inspection team, precipitating yet another Iraqi crisis, it was Primakov, not anyone in the West, who controlled the end-game. As Washington fumed on the sidelines, Primakov, now Russia's foreign minister, cut a deal that allowed Saddam to *appear* to cave in (he let American inspectors back into the country, but cut off their access to dozens of possible weapons sites). In exchange, Saddam won a crucial promise from Primakov: that Russia would work to ease sanctions against Iraq in the United Nations Security Council.

The 67-year-old Primakov is a survivor, a Soviet apparatchik who has prospered in the Yeltsin era and whose own vision of a "new world order" may be more viable nowadays than that of his old Gulf War adversary, George Bush. The foreign minister stands as an emblem, not just of the nasty pedigree of the upper echelons of the new Russian bureaucracy, but also of a broader anti-American trend in Russian attitudes and foreign policy. His vision of "multipolarity" aims to set Russia on a collision course with the West—making the kind of mischief Primakov worked in Iraq a permanent feature of Russia's behavior in the world.

Many Russian intellectuals are in the mood for just such an anti-Western turn. Roy Medvedev—a respected intellectual and dissident in Soviet days—has decried calls for a fascist, nationalist regime in Russia. But even he argues that "no less dangerous are the attempts to turn Russia into a commonplace country of the Western type, thrusting upon it Western values and American-model capitalism, which are alien to our people." The key to national restoration, Medvedev contends, lies in a new assertiveness on the world stage. "Neither 'humility' nor the position of a client of the West will help change the situation. We must stop the country's decline, including by means of foreign policy."

Primakov has taken up Medvedev's challenge, with relish. For him, the fall of the Soviet Empire was a potential personal disaster—which he appears to have turned into triumph. There have always been rumors in Moscow that Primakov has kept secret a Jewish background so as to avoid impeding his official career—thus symbolically rejecting his real family for the embrace of Mother Russia. Whether the rumor is true or not, there is no doubt that Primakov has shrewdly managed to keep his career thriving in all political circumstances.

AS a reporter for *Pravda* in the Middle East in the early 1960s, Primakov was able to weave an impressive web of reporting contacts and political affiliations. He cultivated the big names of the Middle East, including Mustafa Barzani, then the leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan; Hosni Mubarak, the future president of Egypt; Jordan's King Hussein; and a young Iraqi Ba'athist leader named Saddam Hussein. Primakov's work abroad during this period—the latter years of Khrushchev's reign—

Even the respected Roy Medvedev argues against 'dangerous' attempts 'to turn Russia into a commonplace country of the Western type.'

Mr. Rosenberger is assistant to the president of Boston University and a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology, and Policy.

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suggests he had connections at the highest levels of the Soviet apparatus.

Upon returning to Moscow, Primakov took up a number of positions within the USSR's Academy of Sciences and supervised "brainstorming" sessions on problems of Soviet foreign policy. Transcripts of these seminars were compressed into policy papers for emerging Party leaders such as Gorbachev and Yuri Andropov. Primakov also managed to find time to supervise the doctoral thesis of Saddam Hussein's cousin.

Primakov's politicking at home earned him a first-class cabin on a sinking ship—the Communist Party. By 1989, he had risen through the Party's Central Committee to become head of one chamber of the Supreme Soviet. As Primakov watched the Soviet Union come apart, he hedged his bets. He made contacts with liberal reformers—but he also did the Party's bidding, no matter how brutal the task.

As the informal supervisor of troubled Azerbaijan in 1990, when that republic was seeking a measure of autonomy, Primakov at first negotiated with the rebellious Popular Front, but, as the threat of general strikes loomed, he warned of reprisals. "The militia, troops of the MVD, the KGB, and the Procuracy—these additional forces have

Moscow on the Potomac

THE year just past opened with Russia's most highly touted reformer, Anatoly Chubais, on the top of the Kremlin heap. He was given unprecedented power over his country's economic policy by President Boris Yeltsin through concurrent appointments as first deputy prime minister and finance minister after Yeltsin's recovery from quintuple bypass surgery. Although Chubais was widely acknowledged as Russia's most hated public official, even his bitter opponents praised his intelligence and effectiveness. Few attacked his integrity.

The year just starting may be quite different for Chubais. His reputation is now in tatters after a series of scandals that call into question the fundamental nature of the post-Soviet Russian reform. Has it been a true free-market opening, or a way for banking, industrial, and governmental elites—perhaps including Chubais himself—to grow rich at the people's expense? Even Chubais's loyal defender and fellow young reformer, First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov, has said that Chubais is capable of "great stupidity." The recent revelations are indeed a stark demonstration of the taint of impropriety surrounding even the most "radical" reformers in Yeltsin's government.

Chubais's scandals are such that, even by Janet Reno's standards, they would have ensured the devoted attentions of a special prosecutor if he had been serving in the U.S. Government:

—In February the State Duma, by a vote of 235 to 19, accused Chubais of not declaring his full 1996 income and of failing to pay $95,000 in taxes on time. His 1996 income was eventually determined to be some $296,000, a vast sum for anyone in Russia except a reform-era banker. Only 2 per cent of this income was attributed to Chubais's government salary and his work on the Yeltsin presidential campaign.

—In June, the U.S. Agency for International Development canceled a $14-million contract with Harvard University's Institute for International Development to assist Russia's economic reform. Two consultants to the Harvard project, Jonathan Hay and Andrei Shleifer, were accused by the U.S. Government of using their positions for personal gain. Chubais defended the pair—both longtime associates—and claimed that they were victims of American opponents of reform in Russia.

—In July it was revealed that, in January 1996, a non-profit center which was then headed by Chubais had received a $2.9-million unsecured, interest-free loan from tycoon Aleksandr Smolensky, the head of Stolichny Savings Bank (now SBS-Agro). Stolichny was a major beneficiary of the privatization overseen by Chubais, and when a portion of the loan was invested in Russian treasury bills, some of the proceeds ended up in Chubais's personal bank account. Chubais does not dispute the facts; he just argues, once again, that he was under attack from enemies of reform.

—In August, President Yeltsin was forced to dismiss Chubais protégé Alfred Kokh as chairman of the State Property Committee in the wake of the highly controversial sale of 25 per cent of the shares in Russia's telecommunications monopoly Svyazinvest. Kokh had received a $100,000 advance on a book contract from a Swiss firm that is not normally involved in publishing but that is controlled by Oneksimbank, the winner of the high-stakes Svyazinvest auction. In dismissing Kokh, Yeltsin noted that "a number of banks are closer to Kokh's soul" than is appropriate. But Chubais defended the dismissed official.

Mr. Simes is president of the Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom in Washington, D.C. Mr. Saunders is the Center's director.

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arrived from Moscow," he told a crowd on the eve of a crackdown. "Everything is being done to restore order." In the subsequent attack, 130 Azeri protesters were killed, 700 wounded.

Primakov's fence-sitting paid off. He slipped into Gorbachev's inner circle as a member of the Presidential Council. From his seat at the Kremlin he was finally able to turn his long-nurtured ties to leaders in the Middle East into the tools of an assertive foreign policy. The USSR came apart at the seams, but Primakov continued to rise, eventually becoming head of the Foreign Intelligence Service.

However, the pro-Western policies that Andrei Kozyrev pursued as the new Russia's first foreign minister in the early 1990s diminished Primakov's influence. And so, relying on his extensive network of journalists and apparatchiks, Primakov stoked a public-relations assault on his own Foreign Ministry. Throughout 1995, for example, President Yeltsin was bombarded by a campaign of disinformation that included reports that a Western diplomat had found Russia's response to U.S. foreign policy to be surprisingly passive. By the time it was revealed that the diplomat had been speaking of France, not Russia, the campaign had had its effect, and

—Then, it was revealed that Chubais himself had accepted a $90,000 payment from a publishing house affiliated with Oneksimbank. Four of Chubais's aides also received $90,000 each for yet another history of Russia's privatization process. The three aides who were still in government at the time the story broke were fired by Yeltsin; Chubais eventually lost his post as finance minister.

—It got worse for Chubais when in early December a link was exposed between him and the Montes Auri investment company, headed by Alfred Kokh after his dismissal from government. The firm had allegedly made sensational profits investing in Russia's stock and bond markets with inside information from Chubais and Oneksimbank head Vladimir Potanin (while Potanin was still in government). Montes Auri was also tied to the organization through which Chubais received the $2.9-million loan from Stolichny Bank.

Yeltsin insists that Chubais is guilty only of ethical lapses rather than legal ones, but it is clear that the unpopular first deputy prime minister can no longer count on his president's full support. Yeltsin, who has already dumped Chubais once before, has indicated as much, complaining recently in a clear reference to him that "all we've done is swap [Communist] Party slogans for macroeconomic ones." Nor can Chubais count on the support of his principal social base, Russia's tycoons—with whom he propelled Yeltsin to his election victory in June 1996—because of the Svyazinvest auction: it fractured his alliance with most of Russia's banker-oligarchs save those surrounding the auction winner, Oneksimbank.

With his fortunes waning (his disapproval rating is now at 85 per cent), Chubais is now almost totally dependent upon his Western supporters, who have been willing to overlook the scandals. Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are still fighting to save him. The IMF has released $700 million in loans that were being withheld because of (still-unresolved) problems in Russian tax collection, while the World Bank has given Russia two separate $800-million credits. But the crucial support of the Clinton Administration may be waning. The State Department's chief policy-maker on Russia, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, has been urged to stop supporting Chubais by a variety of his Russian contacts, including Igor Malashenko, president of the Russian television network NTV. A past ally of Chubais, Malashenko became his bitter foe in the fight for Russia's spoils after NTV's owner, Vladimir Gusinsky, the founder of Most Bank, was defeated by Oneksimbank in the Svyazinvest auction.

Chubais and his team—borrowing a page from old Soviet propaganda—brand all those who question them as enemies of the market and of democracy.

To counter these and other attacks on Chubais, a number of his friends have begun to fight on his behalf in the American press. Most recently, Anders Aslund, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment, wrote a vigorous three-page defense of Chubais in *The Weekly Standard*. Without bothering to mention his close relationship to Chubais—he's a longtime advisor and friend—Aslund resorts to selective quotation and innuendo to explain away the Chubais scandals and chastise the official's critics as—what else?—enemies of Russian reform (full disclosure: we're among Aslund's chief targets).

Aslund's apology for Chubais's crony capitalism starts with the remarkable assertion that Chubais's acceptance of "the relatively modest sum" of $90,000 as a book advance—for a single chapter in a scholarly book—from a firm benefitting directly from his policies, "suggests a concern for propriety." He goes on to charge that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin "probably" made billions himself—without bothering to present any evidence. Then he ends with a description of Boris Yeltsin as a "pillar of the new Russia" and a "visionary," which is peculiar given that Aslund wrote in the *New York Times* in February 1996—not coincidently, after Yeltsin fired Chubais—that even Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov would be a better president for Russia than Yeltsin.

ASLUND has been joined on the barricades by another close associate of Chubais's, Leonid Gozman, who also omitted any mention of this relationship in his apologia for Chubais in the *Washington Post* in November. Chubais and his team—borrowing a page from old Soviet propaganda—brand all those who question them as enemies of the market and of democracy. This doesn't wash, since the most consistent criticism of Chubais has come not from the Communists or the extreme nationalists, but from Grigory Yavlinsky's impeccably pro-reform Yabloko faction. The leaders of Russia's economic policy today are not angels; neither are they, Chubais included, necessarily devils. But Americans need to be clear-headed about what is really happening in Russia. Those who would let personal connections—innocent or otherwise—drive our Russian policy risk becoming the real "enemies of Russian reform."

—DIMITRI K. SIMES & PAUL SAUNDERS

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the suitably tough-on-the-West Primakov was foreign minister.

In describing Primakov's vision for Russia's foreign policy, it is important to establish what it is not. Primakov is not a field commander in some Clash of Civilizations. He is interested in the trappings of traditional institutions, such as the Orthodox Church, only as a means to a secular end: the expansion of Russian power and influence.

Primakov is not a field commander in some Clash of Civilizations. He is interested in the Orthodox Church, for example, only as a means to a secular end.

When, for example, it is time to apply pressure on a NATO member such as Turkey, Primakov will quietly permit arms shipments to Russia's "Christian allies" in Greek Cyprus. But the real point is making trouble for the West, not reinforcing ancient cultural ties. There is no traditional Orthodox relationship with Turkey's Kurds. But Primakov's Foreign Ministry was happy to lend its support to a conference on their plight in Moscow last March.

Indeed, forthright expressions of traditional Slavophile fears of other races and civilizations provoke Primakov's wrath. When in December 1996 Defense Minister Igor Rodionov gave a speech in which he listed China and Iran as among the threats to Russia, Primakov helped force his resignation. When Primakov looks to the Islamic and Asian worlds, he sees nations that, like Russia, are unjustly trapped in an American-led world order and are struggling to regain their sovereignty.

Thus, the mantra repeated in every Russian communiqué, and in every speech Primakov makes abroad, is "multipolarity." Take, for example, the "Joint Russian–Chinese Declaration about a Multipolar World and the Formation of a New International Order," signed in Moscow last April. "A diversity of political, economic, and cultural development is becoming the norm," it reads. "Each state has the right—proceeding from its specific conditions—to independently choose on its own a way of development without intervention on the part of other states."

Beneath the statement's reassuring tone of international tolerance lurks a deep enmity toward the liberal-democratic order (in this sense "multipolarity" bears some relation to American "multiculturalism"). There is a hint, for example, of the old "anti-imperialist" rhetoric in the Russian–Chinese declaration, which makes reference to the "numerous developing countries and the Non-Aligned movement" that will be "an important force assisting the formation of a multipolar world and new international order." One Chinese delegate explained the joint declaration: "The earth is colorful and cannot be artificially changed into one single color."

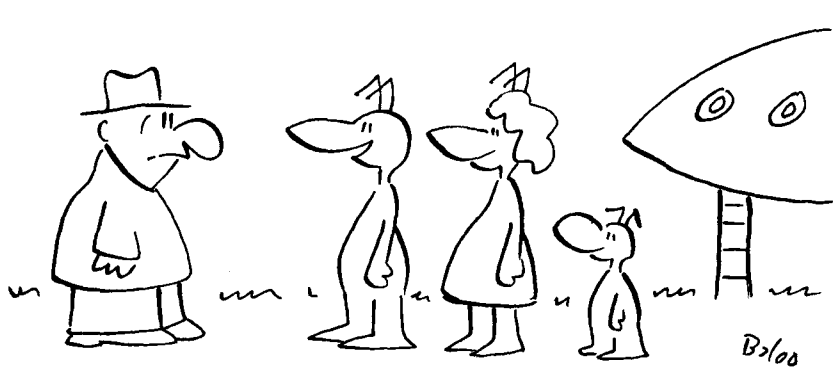
LATELY, Primakov has been gaining ground in places besides Iraq and China. He was a hit at July's meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The rough treatment of the Thai and Malaysian currencies at the hands of international traders had prompted indignation against the "Anglo-Saxon world order." Primakov happily played into it. Anna Perfilyeva applauded the "wonderful way" Primakov had of "giving vent to the irritation about the unceremoniousness of American foreign policy which has been building up deep inside ASEAN" over American support for Israel.

Primakov also maneuvered a démarche toward a longtime (though notoriously prickly) American ally. At a Council of Europe meeting in October, Russia decried America's insistence that France drop its plans to finance an oil pipeline in Iran. In a thinly veiled reference to Uncle Sam, President Yeltsin called for a new pan-European foreign policy. "We do not need an uncle from elsewhere," he said. "We in Europe can unite ourselves." French officials didn't mind the anti-American flavor of the remarks. In fact, both President Jacques Chirac and Premier Lionel Jospin have adopted Primakov's line on a new "multipolar world."

Iran, of course, is a big Primakov booster. Iranian journalists have welcomed every anti-American comment of Russian officials. "During the Cold War," the *Teheran Times* has written, "the United States tried to contain the Soviet Union. Today other countries must contain the United States. Russia, China, and the Non-Aligned countries combined can contain U.S. expansionism. They should not allow the U.S. to change the contour of the world into a unipolar order."

Building a strong alliance with Iran is a critical element of the foreign minister's game plan, for two reasons. As the two most powerful players on the shores of the oil-rich Caspian Sea, Russia and Iran can cooperate to bully smaller neighboring nations into signing favorable exploration and pipeline deals. Secondly, Iran provides Russia with entree into the Persian Gulf, and the Middle East generally.

For all the dangers inherent in a new Axis on the Caspian, there is no more effective example of Primakov's "personal diplomacy" than Moscow's coddling of Iraq. As long as Saddam survives, he's a poster-boy for Primakov's world view: Why should any country postpone doing business with Iraq when Primakov's "multipolar" doctrine offers a convenient vision of the Baghdad regime as just one more chip in the world's rich mosaic? The Clinton Administration doesn't have an answer—which is one reason why more and more countries' governments may start asking. □



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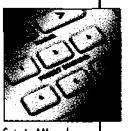

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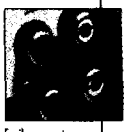

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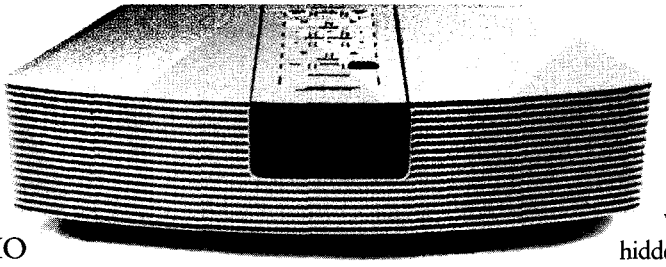

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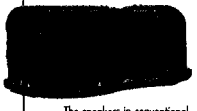

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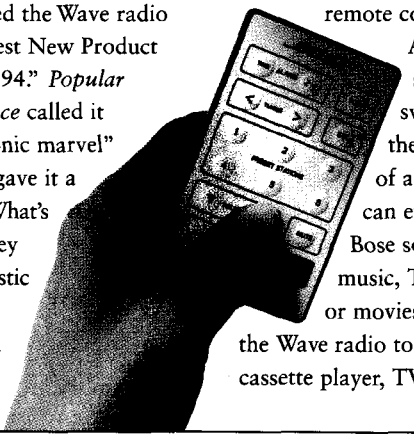

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CRISTOPHER RAPP

LOS ANGELES

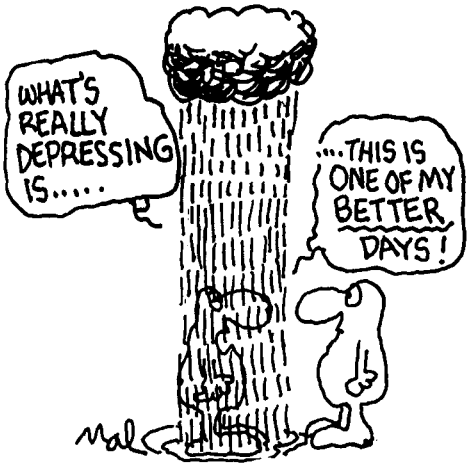
IN 1996, Frank Ury had only one term under his belt on the school board of Orange County's Saddleback Valley Unified District. But he already had a reputation as a renegade. With two friends, he had formed the Education Alliance, an organization which supported conservative candidates running for Orange County school boards. He had also led an effort—opposed (successfully) by the teachers unions—to make algebra a graduation requirement in the district's high schools. Worse still, in the eyes of the California education establishment, Ury had publicly supported Proposition 174—the 1993 voucher initiative, which the California Teachers Association (CTA) spent upwards of $9 million to defeat. Ury's support for this proposition led the local union to circulate a petition calling for his removal from the school board.

In November 1996, with Ury up for re-election, the CTA and its Saddleback affiliate decided it was payback time. They poured an estimated $70,000 into the campaign against Ury. Though he managed to raise $30,000—more than seven times what he had spent in winning the seat in 1992—Ury lost. "The unions wanted to tell me how to think, and I didn't agree with them," says the 33-year-old Ury, an electrical engineer by trade. "Therefore, they made sure I was out of office."

Ury and his partners at the Education Alliance, Mark Bucher and Jim Righeimer, were chastened by the experience—but saw a chance to fight back. The union had funded its attack on Ury—as it does all its political efforts—not with voluntary donations but with money automatically deducted from its members' paychecks. In response, the trio from the Education Alliance drafted the Campaign Reform Initiative, a ballot measure that threatens to hamstring the unions' political efforts by requiring them to get written permission before using a member's dues for politics.

The brewing fight over the ballot initiative promises to be one of the most bitter—and important—of 1998. If passed, the measure would threaten the huge slush funds that make the unions such formidable political players. The unions—not only in California but nationwide—are launching a nuclear attack on the ballot language, while the Republican National Committee and national conservatives have made passing it one of their top priorities. Once again, California finds itself the battleground for an issue that could change the shape of America's politics.

Anyone wondering what the consequences would be of letting workers decide whether or not to support their union's political activism need only consider Washington state. For years, the Washington Education Association (WEA) automatically deducted $13 per year from each teacher's paycheck specifically to support its political-action committee. Teachers could opt out of the deduction, but they had to do so in writing, and in the short window of time between August 1 and August 31.



Mr. Rapp is a journalism fellow at the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in Los Angeles.

This all changed in 1992, when voters approved Initiative 134, which required the union to get permission *before* deducting money for politics. As a result, the number of teachers supporting the union's PAC plummeted from 48,000 to 8,000, a decrease of more than 83 per cent. The WEA spent the next four years trying to circumvent the law; last February the state's attorney general filed suit against the union, alleging that it had made "hundreds of thousands of dollars" in illegal political contributions.

The California initiative borrows heavily from the Washington law. The authorization requirement applies not only to unions but also to employers who deduct workers' money either for a corporate PAC or on behalf of a professional organization or union. This is an important step: typically, for example, it is the school district, and not the teachers union itself, that actually collects members' dues. "We don't think it's right for anybody to have money taken out of their pay without their permission," explains Mark Bucher, "and it doesn't matter whether it's being taken out by a union or a business." With a view to the current national fundraising scandals, the initiative also prohibits foreign contributions in state and local elections.

Once again, California is the battleground for an issue that could change the shape of America's politics.

FOR the most part, teachers unions in California are not as blatantly coercive as the WEA. As CTA officials like to point out, there are even some school districts where teachers are free not to join the union at all. But the vast majority of teachers work in districts where the arrangement is more like a closed shop than a free market. To avoid paying for the union's politics, teachers must resign from the union within a 30-day window, which in some cases only comes around every three years.

Even if a teacher manages to resign, the CTA responds by imposing an "agency fee"—the amount of dues it

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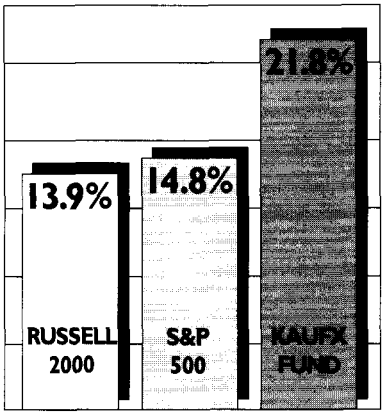

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claims to spend strictly on collective bargaining. Teachers who disagree with the union's calculation must enter a year-long process which culminates in a ruling by a union-appointed arbitrator. At every step of the way the burden is on the members to prove why they should not be forced to give financial support to political candidates and causes they do not favor. "The unions force teachers to go through unbelievable hoops," says Ury. "All this initiative does is tell the unions they have to ask for permission first."

The effect in Washington suggests what would happen if California unions had to ask permission to take members' money.

Since the campaign began this past May it has attracted the attention of conservative and Republican heavy-hitters nationwide. Insurance executive and school-choice supporter J. Patrick Rooney came forward in July with a timely donation. Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform courted Gov. Pete Wilson and financed a major mailing to collect the signatures needed to put the initiative on the ballot. Wilson and former Vice President Dan Quayle serve as honorary chairmen of the initiative, and it has received the endorsement of California's Republican legislative leaders.

The unions and the Left are poised for a counterattack. CTA official John Hein has dismissed the initiative as a "scheme to silence those of us who defend the public schools." Art Pulaski, an official of the California Labor Federation, calls it "an attack on workers' ability to have a voice in the political process." In a *Los Angeles Times* column, Jesse Jackson opined that "California's rabid Right is now opening a new front in its class war," and suggested that the initiative threatened the environment, civil rights, the 40-hour work week, and—yes—child-labor laws.

Jackson's hysteria is understandable. In 1996, the CTA reported $2.7 million in contributions, with close to $1.1 million going directly to the state Democratic Party. (The state Republican committee received only $65,800.) The effect Initiative 134 has had in Washington state suggests what will happen to those figures if unions have to ask permission before taking members' money.

The California initiative is on the ballot for the June 2 primary voting this year, and if passed it will go into effect on July 1. If a significant percentage of union members decide not to authorize the use of their dues, the unions will be faced with a disaster during the fall gubernatorial and congressional elections. Even if the unions defeat the initiative, doing so will be likely to cost them some $25 to $30 million, reducing the resources they will have available to oppose other reforms. An initiative to dismantle the state's disastrous bilingual-education program is already set for the June ballot, and there are whispers about an effort to prepare a school-choice proposition in time for this coming November's ballot.

Last spring, local union affiliates were so desperate to derail the Campaign Reform Initiative that they harassed and even attempted to bribe CRI signature gatherers into putting down their pens; the matter eventually had to be settled in court. When the CRI campaign turned in 775,000 signatures in November—nearly twice as many as required to qualify for the ballot—a union-sponsored organization called Californians to Protect Employee Rights sued (unsuccessfully) to have signatures invalidated because of the placement of the contribution flap on the letter sent out by Gov. Wilson and Mr. Norquist.

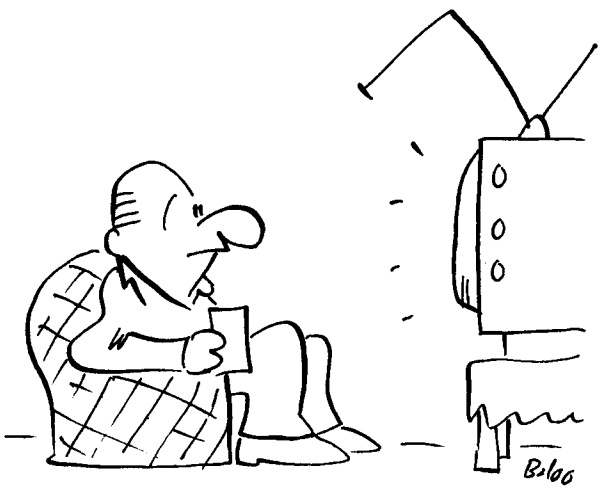
Union leaders are also threatening to move forward with three retaliatory initiatives targeted at business interests—despite the fact that, by the unions' own admission, corporate California has played no part in the CRI campaign. Dan Terry, president of California Professional Firefighters, explained that his initiative—which would phase out all corporate tax benefits—is simply a threat—although one he is prepared to carry out. "If business gets actively involved in CRI," he warns, "we will be inclined to go forward with ours."

Though June is a long way off and the CRI campaign is likely to be outspent 3 to 1, early poll results show support for the initiative. A recent Field Poll of California voters reported 72 per cent in favor (including 66 per cent of Democrats) and only 22 per cent opposed. Significantly, union members supported the initiative at the same rate as non-union members.

The same sentiments seem to hold at the national level. In a CNN/*USA Today* poll conducted in October, 72 per cent of respondents supported the idea behind the initiative; a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll reported 82 per cent support.

Indeed, the CRI's greatest impact might eventually be on the national level. It is already galvanizing similar "paycheck protection" efforts in other states. Signatures are being collected for a similar initiative in Oregon, and measures are in the works in Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Ohio, Missouri, and several other states. Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform is currently working with legislators across the country with the goal of announcing paycheck-protection legislation in fifty states on January 21. At the federal level there are currently three bills which mirror the CRI—though none of them is going anywhere fast.

Just as Proposition 209—the California Civil Rights Initiative—jump-started a national debate about racial preferences, a victory in California for the Campaign Reform Initiative could give paycheck protection legitimacy nationwide. In any case, it's a safe bet that the CTA already wishes that it had just left Frank Ury alone. □



"Warning: Portions of the following program may destroy what little faith you have left in human nature."

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Marriage Penalty

The union of gay couples in Hawaii implies not an expansion of marriage–but its end.

GERARD V. BRADLEY

FOR months, conservatives have been alarmed at the prospect that the Hawaii Supreme Court was about to foist "gay marriage," and its implicit approval of homosexual activity, on our fiftieth state. They are wrong. It is true that all the courts that have so far ruled in *Baehr* v. *Miike* have indicated that the state may not limit the legal status of marriage to couples of different sexes; that would be sex discrimination. And it is also almost certainly true that the Hawaii Supreme Court will agree. Miss Ninia Baehr and Miss Genora Dancel will ring their wedding bells; traditionalists will wring their hands. But there is one point that neither traditionalists nor progressives have so far grasped: What is happening in Hawaii is far more radical than "gay marriage."

For the Hawaiian courts' concept of same-sex marriage is really no-sex marriage. Consider footnote 11 of an earlier ruling in this case—and keep a bottle of Scotch handy when you do. In that ruling the Hawaii Supreme Court says: "'Homosexual' and 'same-sex' marriages are not synonymous; by the same token, a 'heterosexual' same-sex marriage is, in theory, not oxymoronic. . . . Parties to 'a union between a man and a woman' may or may not be homosexuals. Parties to a same-sex marriage could be either homosexuals or heterosexuals." The court later says that "it is immaterial" whether "any" of the plaintiffs—that is, the same-sex couples, including Miss Baehr and Miss Dancel—are homosexuals. The court noted that, significantly, nowhere did the plaintiffs say they were homosexual.

What most people have in mind when they talk about marriage is, of course, the sexual union of a man and woman. That kind of marriage requires sexual complementarity and consummation. Thus, the Hawaiian government—in opposing the union of Misses Baehr and Dancel—made the common-sense argument that "the fact that homosexual partners cannot form a state-licensed marriage is not a product of impermissible discrimination," but rather "a function of the biologic inability as a couple to satisfy the definition of the status to which they aspire." The state argued, in other words, that given what marriage really is—metaphysically, morally, prelegally—it is not that persons of the

Mr. Bradley is Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame.

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same sex should not be *allowed* to marry, but that they *cannot*.

The court's response was to call this argument "circular and unpersuasive," "an exercise in tortured and conclusory sophistry." It called traditional marriage the "federal construct" of marriage, which is defined by, or at least associated with, a bundle of constitutional rights: the "fundamental rights of procreation, childbirth, abortion, and child rearing." (That formulation is, by the way, not only grotesque but a false statement of the law, since single people possess all these alleged rights too—except, of course, that fathers and husbands have no legal say in the abortion decision.)

The court said traditional marriage is associated with the 'fundamental rights of procreation, childbirth, abortion, and child rearing.'

Marriage, then, has been redefined as merely a gateway to government benefits. At one point, the Hawaii Supreme Court described the state's authority as "stewardship over the institution of marriage," but it quickly moved away from that formulation. Within a couple of pages it is calling the state's authority a "power to regulate marriage," then saying that "marriage is a state-conferred legal status," and finally referring to "the state's monopoly on the business of marriage creation." So much for "the institution" of marriage.

The Hawaii Supreme Court's own "construct" of marriage, the one it is imposing on the people of its state, is not at all tethered to the moral reality of the matter. The judges' "marriage" is, in principle, sexless, and almost all about money. The court listed 14 specific benefits to which this "legal partnership" gives entree. Twelve were clearly economic advantages; the other two—easier name-changing and the evidentiary privilege for spousal communication—were relatively minor.

The relation of this legal counterfeit to real marriage is entirely accidental. Really married people may be "married" in the Hawaiian sense, but that legal identity is not tied to, nor is it about, their real marriage. It is like the relation between churches and corporations. Most churches are legally incorporated, but that legal status neither captures what a church is nor makes all other corporations churches.

If Arnold and Alan, or Jane and Jill, get "married" Hawaiian-style, how will other states treat them when they travel? The Constitution has something to say on this matter: "Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state." Once any state recognizes a same-sex couple's "marriage," that marriage would have to be recognized throughout the country—even where that couple could not legally enter into a marriage. In other words, get ready for airline fare wars from Key West and Provincetown to Maui, and back. Hawaii could become to same-sex marriage what Nevada used to be to divorce. And all state policies on the traditional composition of marriage would come to naught.

Almost everyone who wants to protect mainlanders from this tsunami—including the Republicans who passed the Defense of Marriage Act last year—is trying to create an exception to the general rule of "married here, married everywhere." It's not likely to work.

The policy of interstate comity behind the Full Faith and Credit Clause is a good and powerful one, especially when it comes to domestic relations. Otherwise a person could be legally married here, adulterous and bigamous there. Traditionalists arguing for this exception defense would have to convince courts in each state to which Hawaiian couples traveled that this principle of interstate comity should be diluted *and* that the concept of marriage that the Hawaii Supreme Court called circular and sophistical is in fact rational.

Don't hold your breath. The alternative is that other states would give *no* credit to *any* "marriages" formed in Hawaii under the new legal arrangements. *Not* no credit for Arnold and Alan but full credit for Bob and Carol—none for anybody.

THE position of other states should not be that Hawaii has hazardously expanded the definition of marriage. Hawaii should be seen as having altogether abolished marriage, legally speaking. What the Hawaii Supreme Court is setting up is better described as a "household" than as a marriage, and Hawaiian "householders" have no legitimate claim on the special privileges married couples enjoy in other states.

Hawaii's travel industry would not benefit from this policy. Bob and Carol, if they should marry in Hawaii, would not be legally married anywhere else. But if they moved with intent to settle, the imposition on them should be trivial. The destination state could say that out-of-state couples eligible to marry under its marriage laws are to be treated as married upon some statement of intent to that effect. Migrating same-sex couples would be, as at present, unable to marry in the new domicile state. Temporary travelers from Hawaii would be legally unmarried.

It figures, however, that in vacationland Bob and Carol will carry on as a couple with ease, just as Arnold and Alan will in some, but not all, locales. And if traveling Hawaiians do find themselves ill served by these arrangements—well, perhaps that experience will stimulate the judicial reconsideration that this case so desperately needs. □

"Name twelve basest desires . . ."

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Alien Menace

Lt. Ripley is Hollywood's mythical woman–butch and ready to kill.

JAMES BOWMAN

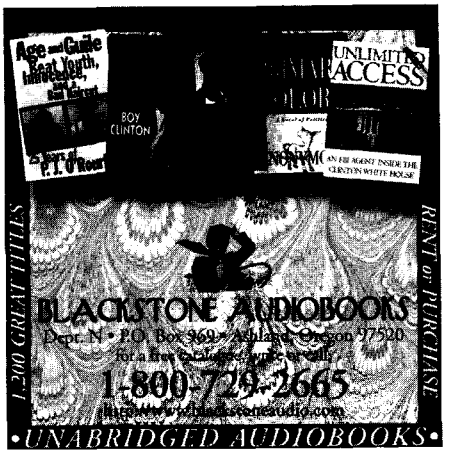
EVERY civilization needs its self-justifying myths. And the most important of these myths are always those by which we rationalize our violent acts. Traditionally, myths of the heroic—either for its own sake (Homer) or for the sake of nation-building (Virgil, the Bible)—have attempted to give meaning to the grisly reality of squalid tribal warfare. America's great national myth of the settlement and taming of the frontier grew out of the slaughter of indigenous peoples, which it was meant to explain and palliate. This myth continued to resonate with Americans in movies and popular fiction long after the Indians had been defeated and well into a period in which America saw herself as having a similar civilizing mission to the world.

The advent of "multiculturalism" has put an end to this myth, with what consequences it is still too early to tell. But that does not mean that we have now learned to live without either heroes or myths. On the contrary, new myths are now being manufactured by Hollywood featuring the imagery of heroic feminism and designed to justify abortion as that form of violence made necessary by our hedonistic and unisex "lifestyle." An obvious example of this myth-making is to be found in the *Alien* series of films, whose most recent installment, *Alien Resurrection*, manages more strikingly than any of its predecessors to render an innocence at least as complete as that of the Noble Savage in the tones and tints of a terrible savagery.

Like most myths, this one has taken time, several redactions, and the collaboration of many talents to be brought to its present state of perfection. It is hard to remember now that in the original *Alien* (1979) Sigourney Weaver's archetypal character, Lt. Ripley, was wreathed in feminine curls, or that in the sequel, *Aliens* (1986), her chief concern was to mother a little girl (oddly called "Newt") and protect her from the horrible, dragon-like creatures that incubate inside human bodies and bring themselves to birth by bursting through the chest. By the time of *Alien*^{3} (1992), Lt. Ripley had become completely de-feminized, appearing in masculine attire and with shaved head, and living on terms of near-equality with a crew of "double-Y-chromosome" male convicts.

Yet the feminist subtext has been there from the beginning. Always Lt. Ripley has been a lone female (or nearly lone) in masculine company; always she has been the one among the space argonauts clear-sighted enough to see that the only good Alien is a dead Alien. It is she alone who protests against claims on

Mr. Bowman is the movie critic of The American Spectator.



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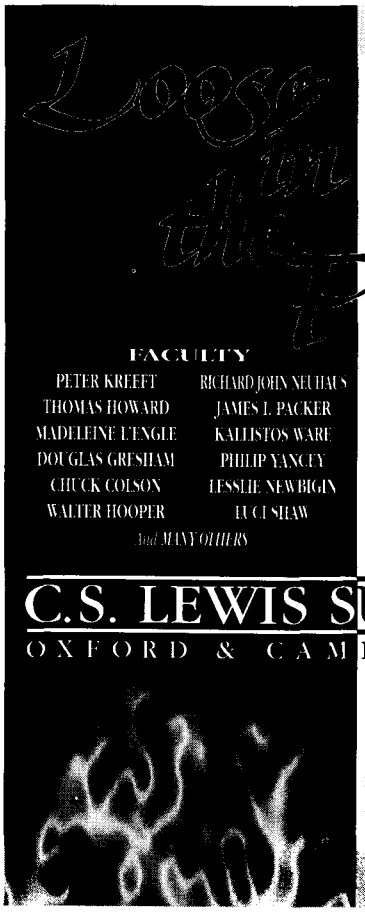

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behalf of the greater good by which a sinister masculine organization known as "the Company" foolishly attempts to nurture the monsters for the sake of its "weapons division." Now, in the fourth film in the series, we get a glimpse of the Company's research facilities and find that the toothy and ravenous creature familiar from the first three is only one among an appalling collection of quasi-fetal grotesques, preserved in giant tubes of formaldehyde.

AT this point Lt. Ripley—or rather her clone, since the original took a fiery and self-sacrificial plunge into a lead smelter at the end of *Alien*^{3} in order to extinguish the Alien life within her—is allowed one or two expressions of her residual femininity. A fetal creature laid out on an operating table croaks out a wish to die, and she obliges by incinerating it and all the other specimens with a flamethrower. Given the urgency of killing the flesh-eating fetuses, as opposed to the merely pathetic and helpless ones, the film's emblematic macho man, played by Ron Perlman, expresses bewilderment at the waste of ammunition and concludes that it "must be a chick thing."

Otherwise Lt. Ripley once again shows herself in the new film—directed by the brilliant Frenchman Jean-Pierre Jeunet—to be the take-charge guy, the cool one in a crisis, as most of her male comrades are gibbering with terror. In one particularly memorable scene she shows two male swaggerers who have made the mistake of regarding her as sexual prey that she is not only stronger than they (*much* stronger) but also a better basketball player. Ouch! *That's* hitting them in a sensitive place.

The Ripley clone has in this film illogically taken on some of the characteristics of the monster she has up until now been at pains to exterminate. We learn that her blood has the Alien characteristic of eating, acid-like, through any substance outside her skin. It is this quality which comes to the fore in the film's climactic scene, as she and an ostensibly feminine robot (Winona Ryder) take up a symbolic and nightmarish motherhood to a giant Alien fetus. Regarding Lt. Ripley as its mother, it has regretfully to be disposed of. She at first nuzzles the horrible thing with an apparently maternal show of feeling, but then flings a drop of her blood at the window of the spaceship, creating a small hole through which the creature is sucked in disgusting ribbons of flesh and blood. As it is cut to pieces and evacuated into space, Lt. Ripley whispers: "I'm sorry."

It's about as close to a depiction of abortion you're ever likely to see on the Silver Screen. The ending of this inconvenient life is said to have "saved the earth," and the earth in gratitude displays a pastel sunset of surpassing beauty as the butch Lt. Ripley and her *femme*-ish android gal-pal look forward to a life together entirely unconstrained by the burdens of nature. They are exemplars of the ideal androgyne of the new feminist mythology, an "all-purpose, abstract person," as Jean Bethke Elshtain puts it in her new book, *Real Politics: At the Center of Everyday Life*, "with all nastiness expunged, bodilyness removed, differences eliminated." But it appears that such *nastiness* and *bodilyness*, as tenacious as conscience itself, require a powerful mythic purgative for their elimination. □

Sinking Ships

THE myth-making property of Hollywood movies is indeed most often employed these days on behalf of a left-liberal agenda. The fact is even more evident in historical films than in science fiction, as two of this season's Christmas blockbusters make clear. Not only are Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* and James Cameron's *Titanic* both named after ships, they both marry impressive cinematic sophistication to a moral drama of babyish simplicity. To be sure, anyone faced with the daunting necessity of having to make back an investment of $75 million (*Amistad*) or $200 million (*Titanic*) had better keep it simple. But there are ways of giving the public what it wants without making such ludicrous demonstrations of the obvious.

Not that anyone is disposed to quarrel with the proposition that white slave traders and their apologists were evil men or that rich people who are contemptuous of the poor and try to keep women from having fulfilling lives and careers are, uh, ditto. Yet at the same time, you can't help noticing that these are rather easy targets in this day and age. There's not much chance of our having to pay a price for booing and hissing these once-powerful but long-dead white males. And it is much easier for Hollywood to hate them than, say, the living Muslim slave traders of the southern Sudan or glamorous rap artists who celebrate the macho joys of insulting and beating up women. Moreover, the resurrection of historical racists and sexists as cinematic bogeymen brings with it a political message of a rather more dubious quality.

Amistad, for example, seeks to confirm one of the orthodox tenets of the racial-grievance industry; namely that slavers plying the "Middle Passage" across the Atlantic routinely threw their cargo overboard for little more than the sadistic pleasure to be had from doing so. This doubtful fact has found its way into the *Amistad*-related educational kit supplied to schools by DreamWorks, the film's producers, and so contributes to continuing racial division and its political exploitation.

Similarly, *Titanic* demonstrates to even so learned a historian as Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* that "Europe's ruling class" before the First World War "was composed mainly of imbeciles," while even so eminent a moralist as Frank Rich of the *New York Times* warns Bill Gates "or any other potentially hubristic baron of the New Economy" that he'd better watch carefully to see "how a tycoon's arrogance plays in the court of American opinion."

This, by the way, is an oddly naïve point of view for a former theater critic to adopt. After all, the fictional "tycoon's arrogance" in *Titanic* is entirely fabricated by the filmmakers precisely in order to produce the kind of revulsion that Mr. Rich (and, of course, others) so reliably feels toward him. But then, presumably, Frank Rich minds that kind of cheap manipulation much less than he would if it did not tend so resoundingly to confirm his own political views.

—JAMES BOWMAN

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Day Careless

Studies increasingly confirm the common-sense intuition that day care poses dangers to small children. So why is the Clinton Administration pushing it?

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

UNTIL recently, parents typically had a far more negative view of day care than experts did. Not long ago, I stumbled across the following datum in a 1992 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* that may help explain why: In the course of one year of full-time day care, a middle-class white male toddler was "likely to be bitten" *nine times*.

A social scientist might point out that there is no firm evidence that being mauled by one's peers has any negative effect on one's psychosocial development. But I have never run across the parent who, faced with this bit of news, does not shudder. That is the difference between a social scientist and a parent.

But over the last decade, the gap between expert and folk wisdom appears to be closing. A growing number of child-development experts have joined the ranks of parents who worry that extensive day care is not good for young children.

An emerging body of research suggests that children in full-time day care are less likely to be firmly attached to their parents and are on average more disobedient toward adults and more aggressive toward their peers than children cared for primarily by their parents. In certain circumstances, day care also puts children's cognitive development at risk.

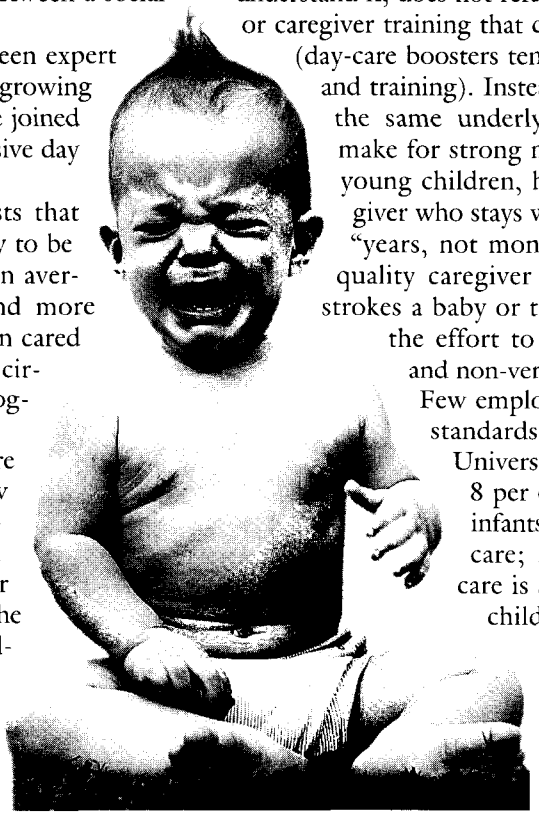
Of course, not all children in day care are damaged by the experience. But the new data should give parents—and policymakers—pause, especially as the Clinton Administration is ready to unveil a major new child-care initiative. For in this case, the Administration is promoting as "child-friendly" policy something actively harmful to some children.

A review of the day-care literature was published in 1996 by Michael E. Lamb of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHHD). While noting that non-parental care "need not" have harmful effects, Lamb concluded that it often does, depending "on the quality of care and the child's age, temperament, and individual background." Under ideal circumstances—when the child develops a strong, stable attachment to an alternative caregiver—day care may not be harmful. But, he concludes, "in other circumstances, [non-parental care] leads to behavior problems (including aggression & noncompliance)."

The trouble is that most day-care kids are, indeed, in "other circumstances." Quality child care, as experts now understand it, does not refer to variables such as group size or caregiver training that can be regulated by government (day-care boosters tend to be obsessed with licensing and training). Instead, quality care is dependent on the same underlying emotional processes that make for strong mother–child relationships. For young children, high-quality care means a caregiver who stays with the child for long periods—"years, not months," says one expert. A high-quality caregiver babbles, chatters, coos, hugs, strokes a baby or toddler, and consistently makes the effort to respond warmly to his verbal and non-verbal attempts at communication.

Few employees can meet such demanding standards. A 1995 national study by the University of Colorado found that only 8 per cent of day-care centers serving infants and toddlers offer high-quality care; in 40 per cent of centers, the care is so bad that it endangers young children's psychological and cognitive development. Indeed, for cognitive development, the research suggests that the children of educated mothers may be at special risk—because of the contrast between the care they get at home and at the typical day-care center.

Just how harmful is the day care most children receive? The evidence falls into two categories. The first comes from medical researchers. Day care, it turns out, is definite-



Miss Gallagher is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values, and a nationally syndicated columnist. Kathryn Jean Lopez helped with the research on this article.

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ly not good for babies' health. This is not surprising: group care exposes babies and toddlers to large numbers of biological strangers, many of whom are not toilet trained and who drool, making day care a breeding ground for infectious disease.

A 1992 review published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* concludes: "[C]hildren less than age 2 years who attend day-care centers are more likely to acquire respiratory infections at an earlier age than those cared for at home." Children in day care are about one and one half times as likely to get "acute respiratory illness" as children at home and have up to three and one half times more outbreaks of acute diarrhea.

Most of these day-care illnesses are not life-threatening. But sometimes even minor illnesses can have long-lasting consequences. A study published in March 1997 in *Pediatrics* concludes that between 1981 and 1988 the proportion of preschoolers with chronic ear infections leapt from 18.7 per cent to 26 per cent, largely because more children are in group care.

Not only is a chronic earache unpleasant; it can also lead to "hearing loss, lowered IQ, poor school performance, learning disabilities, and even school dropout," reports child-care expert Ron Haskins. A 1996 study by Penn State researcher Lynne Vernon-Feagans and colleagues found that "day-care-attending children with chronic [ear infections] in the first 3 years of life play alone more often and have fewer positive and fewer negative verbal interactions with peers than nonchronic children in day care." Overall, according to a 1989 estimate by Dr. Haskins in the *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, the excess illness attributable to day care costs American families and society $1.8 billion and the lives of at least one hundred children each year.

THE medical consequences of group care should be disturbing enough. But nearly as chilling is the large number of studies that link early, extensive day care with psychological, social, and behavioral problems.

A 1994 international meta-analysis by Claudio Violato and Clare Russell of the University of Calgary, involving over 22,000 children, concludes: "Full-time care for infants and young children [puts] a substantial proportion of the population at risk for psychological maladaptation." Almost 50 per cent of day-care children, for example, had an insecure attachment to their mothers, compared to about 30 per cent in the population as a whole.

Violato and Russell's finding exactly mirrors the results of two longitudinal studies reviewed by Jay Belsky and Michael Rovine in *Child Development* in 1988: About half of infants placed in twenty or more hours of nonparental care per week, they found, had insecure attachments to their mothers.

Sons of mothers who worked more than 35 hours a week were also less likely to be securely attached to their fathers. As a result, almost 30 per cent of day-care kids were insecurely attached to both parents, compared to just 7 per cent of children in families that used less than twenty hours a week of nonparental care.

Many (though not all) studies also find that children in extensive day care are more aggressive with peers and less compliant with the requests of adults. In a Texas study of 236 children by Deborah Lowe Vandell and Mary Anne Corasaniti, for example, 8-year-olds who had a history of extensive day care received lower ratings by teachers and parents for compliance, work habits, peer relationships,

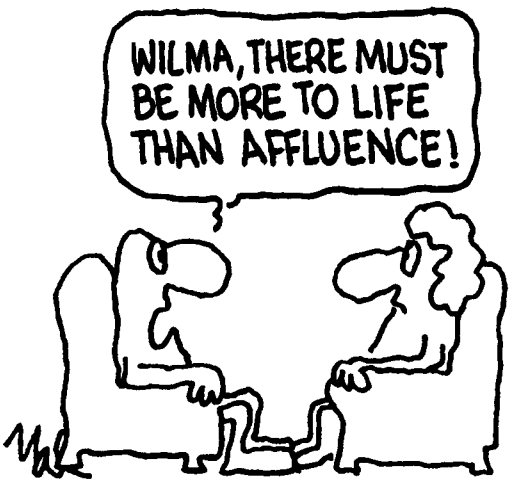
Day care, it turns out, is definitely not good for babies' health. This is not surprising: group care exposes babies to large numbers of biological strangers.

and emotional health. Day-care kids also received lower academic and conduct grades and were rated more difficult to discipline. In this study, child-care history was a better predictor of problems than family characteristics such as socioeconomic status.

And in 1991 Jay Belsky and David Eggebeen studied a large national sample in the *National Longitudinal Survey on Youth*. They found that 4-to-6-year-old children were much more likely to be rated "less compliant" if, during their first 2 years of life, their mothers had worked more than thirty hours a week. Again, early and extensive day care had more influence on a child's behavior than family characteristics such as socioeconomic status or the mother's education.

Michael Lamb, in his review of day-care literature for the NICHHD, found these tendencies turning up over and over again, "particularly when the care is of poorer quality."

DAY-CARE defenders faced with such dark data show an almost comic insistence on looking at the bright side of life. "Children who have been in day care," suggests Alison Clarke Stewart, in a 1989 article for *The American Psychologist*, "think for themselves" and "want their own way." Striking a blow for infant independence everywhere, "They are not willing to comply with adults' arbitrary rules . . ."



When redefining childhood virtue does not suffice, day-care defenders are apt to resort to the "per se" defense. There is no evidence that day care "per se" is harmful to children; after all, many children in day care do just fine. What harms children, they argue, is low-quality care. The NICHHD's ongoing highly publicized seven-year day-care study is perhaps the biggest, most sophisticated attempt to disentangle the effects of quality of day care from the effects of quantity of day care.

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This study is using a diverse but not a nationally representative sample, with the parents being predominantly white, married, and middle class. The results have been widely trumpeted as offering a clean bill of health for day care. The reality is more complex.

The first report, released last year, analyzed infants' attachment to their mothers at 15 months. The study found a pattern of dual risks for infants in day care: in the case of mothers who were relatively less sensitive to their children's needs, placement in as little as ten hours of day care each week regardless of quality, or in low-quality care, or with more than one caregiver in the first year, made it more likely that those children would be insecurely attached to their mothers.

Jay Belsky, a professor at Penn State University and one of many researchers involved in the design and analysis of the NICHHD study, points out that this study may understate the dangers of day care for the average family. "The most stressed, least sensitive mothers," he says, "are the group that looks most vulnerable, and they are also least represented in the NICHHD sample—we may have underestimated the effects of day care."

The second batch of analyses, reported last spring, also contained some disturbing results from direct observations of mother–child relations. "What we found was an intriguing, consistent, and disconcerting pattern people run away from," Belsky notes: more time in day care led to a small, but measurable, deterioration in mother–child relationships.

The deterioration was evident both in terms of mothers' attitudes toward their children and in terms of children's attitudes toward their mothers. More time in day care was related to less sensitive mothering when the child was 6 months, more negative maternal interactions when the child was 15 months, and an increase in insensitive mothering at 36 months. Meanwhile, day-care children were less positively oriented toward and engaged with their mothers, and expressed less affection for them at age three.

Although the magnitude of these changes is not large, Prof. Belsky points out, the direction of the changes is clear and consistent: children who spend more time in day care develop weaker and more problematic relationships with their mothers.

A researcher reports that children who spend more time in day care develop weaker and more problematic relationships with their mothers.

Put the NICHHD findings together, and the pattern becomes even more disturbing. Day care has the worst immediate effects on children with less sensitive mothers. And, over time, women who put their children into day care become somewhat less sensitive.

Most remarkable for Belsky was the reaction of many of his fellow researchers to the data. "They said, in effect, 'These findings don't matter because we didn't find any attachment differences when we looked at 15 months,'" he reports incredulously. "It is imbecilic to say that findings at 24 and 36 months don't matter because of something you found at 15 months."

Though the effects uncovered by the NICHHD were not dramatic, the question lingers in Belsky's mind: are the relatively small negative effects uncovered by the NICHHD study "small because they are small in nature, or because our assessment capacities are limited?" He points out, "We

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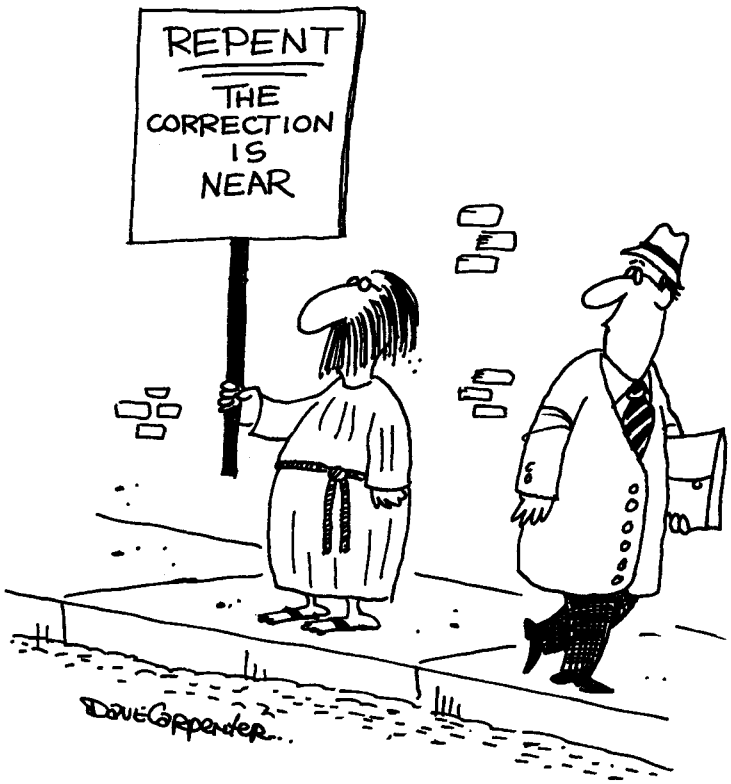
help !!!

Perfectionist

Welcomed
into heaven
by choring angels, she
gave them the pitch and got them all
on key.

—Gloria A. Maxson

"But here I am telling you *the country is going to the dogs."*



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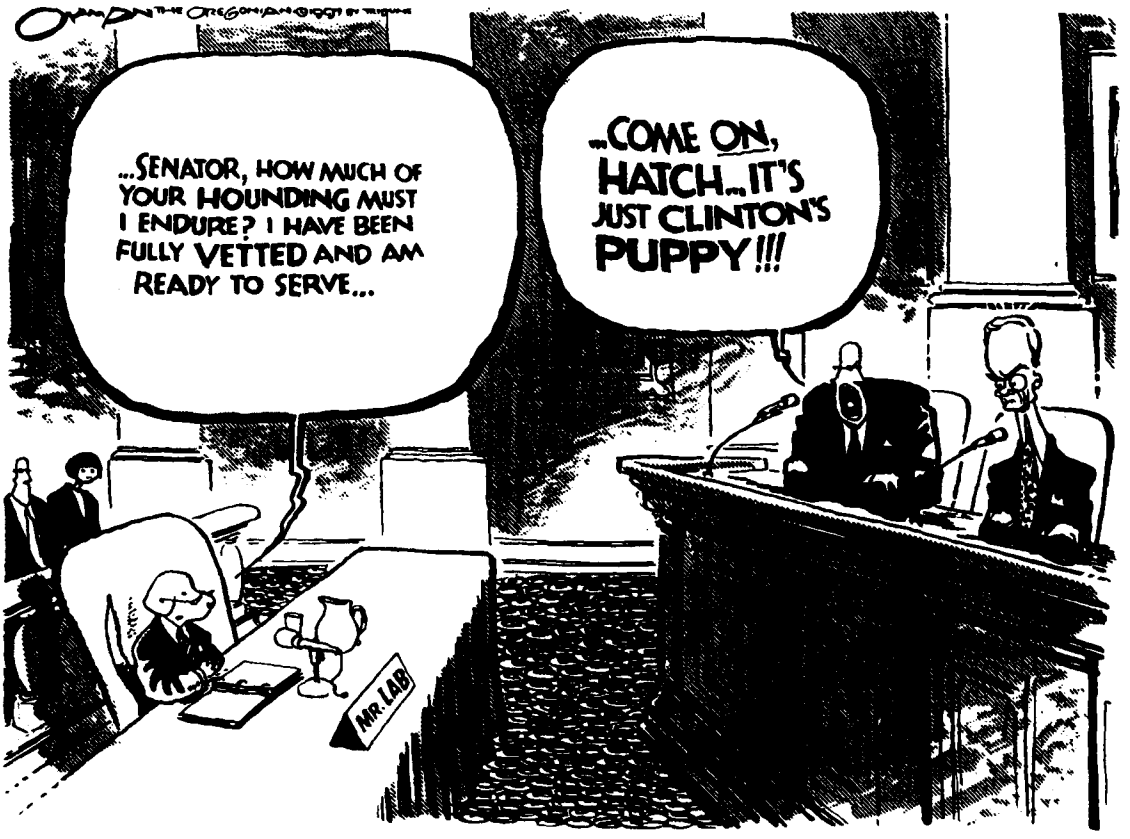
...SENATOR, HOW MUCH OF YOUR HOUNDING MUST I ENDURE? I HAVE BEEN FULLY VETTED AND AM READY TO SERVE...
...COME ON, HATCH...IT'S JUST CLINTON'S PUPPY!!!
MR. LAB

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examined mother–child interaction for fifteen or twenty minutes, and observed child care for two days."

IN the NICHHD sample, the amount of time a child spent in day care had in itself no effect on cognitive development, but quality of care did. Again, quality of care, in this context, refers not to externals but to how much caregivers talk to their charges. Given the research on the quality of existing infant care, the NICHHD study thus strongly suggests that most children now placed in early day care are at intellectual risk. This is particularly true when educated mothers leave their babies in the care of less educated caregivers.

One longitudinal study of 33 private nurseries in Great Britain, for example, found that 6-year-olds who had been placed in extensive day care as infants had retarded language skills compared to home-reared children. This finding, reports Patricia Morgan, a senior research fellow at the Institute for Educational Affairs and author of *Who Needs Parents?*, was the more remarkable given that the parents of day-care toddlers were of higher socioeconomic status on average than the parents of home-reared toddlers.

Even older children may suffer when mothers work long hours and leave them with others. Several recent studies suggest, in the words of sociologists Paul Amato and Alan Booth, that "mothers who work part-time have more academically competent children, on average, than do mothers who work long hours or who are not in the labor force." Mothers who work part-time, for example, are more likely than those employed full-time to discuss school with children, check their homework, and restrict their television viewing.

Amato and Booth's own 1997 book-length study, *A Generation at Risk*, analyzing data on some two thousand married couples followed over a 15-year period, found that sons of women who work overtime (more than 45 hours a week) will attain on average a full year less of education, and earn nearly $9,000 a year less (after controlling for their education) than sons of women who work less or not at all. When the mothers are highly educated, their sons suffer even more from the loss of time and attention. "Overall," conclude Amato and Booth, "sons have the highest level of attainment when their mothers are employed part-time and the lowest level of attainment when their mothers are employed overtime."

As troubling as the immediate effects of day care on children are questions about the long-term effects of day care on families. Will people who, as children, spent most of their waking hours cared for by employees still feel obliged to help care for ailing parents in their old age? Will they place as high a value on family life? Is it likely that the two-career day-care model is contributing to the decline of marriage and family life? Research to date provides no definitive answers, but some disturbing clues.

Several researchers, for example, have found that very young children whose mothers work full-time tend to have poorer relations not only with their mothers but also with their fathers. In a study by Wendy Goldberg and M. Ann Easterbrooks, for example, men with employed wives found their toddlers' behavior more aggravating and viewed their kindergartners' behavior more negatively.

Weakened attachment of fathers to children may, in turn, help explain the fact that marriages in which both partners work full-time are far more prone to divorce. Even when two-career couples stay together, their children may not. According to research by Amato and Booth, women whose mothers worked full-time are 166 per cent more likely to end up divorced, even after taking into account the parents' marital status and the daughters' own education and career achievements.

The data confirm common sense: attitudes matter. Family-centered parents tend to raise family-centered children, who value stable marriage in no small part because it permits children to be cared for by their own kin.

ONE of the long-standing findings of day-care research is that children suffer both when mothers who want to work stay at home, and when mothers who would prefer to stay at home must work. But, in the real world, mothers who want to put their babies into day care are a rare breed. Researchers in one small study who tried to distinguish between the effects of maternal satisfaction and those of day care found that the data did not permit them to do so: because, to their surprise, "the dissatisfied mothers were predominantly the employed mothers and the satisfied mothers the nonemployed (and largely the part-time employed as well)," note Margaret Owen and Martha J. Cox.

Data from the NICHHD study tend to confirm the importance of respecting mothers' preferences. "For kids in full-time child care, the mother's belief that work is good for children seems to be positively related to functioning at 3 years of age," Belsky reports. "For kids not in nonmaternal child care, the mother's belief that work isn't good for children is positively related to their function at 3 years."

Thus, it stands to reason, the more that outside pressures—including government subsidies—help push grudging parents into using day care, the worse the negative effects of day care are likely to become.

THE kinds of problems associated with day care don't necessarily show up in all day-care studies. The research is typically conducted on fairly small groups of children who are not representative of the population at large. Even the NICHHD study involves a group of parents who, having agreed to intrusive observation of the family at home and of the children in day care may be inherently unrepresentative.

Whether the current research raises big warning flags or small ones depends in part on how unusual the modern form of commercial day care is as a child-rearing method. Day-care advocates like to portray exclusive parental care of children as an historical anomaly. "They say mothers have always shared caregiving," Belsky remarks. "That passes off as intellectual sophistication these days. What they don't go on to say is that in aboriginal societies where mothers share caregiving they do so with networks of blood relatives—with people who will know both the parents and the child their whole lives." By contrast, the current reality of day care—children cared for by a series of biological strangers who have no long-term commitment

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to the child or the parents—is an experiment unprecedented in human history.

Parents, of course, instinctively know this. One of the best-kept secrets in the child-care debate is that most parents, including a majority of working mothers, try hard to keep child care in the family. In a national survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates last February among parents with children under age 4, 72 per cent of parents said their child was cared for primarily by the mother or father. An additional 10 per cent reported that some other relative cared for the child while the parents worked; just 9 per cent of parents used a day-care facility.

American families' preference for care by kin is consistent with the practices of every other human society.

The fact that more than 8 out of 10 small children are cared for by family members may help explain why in one recent survey, when asked, Is finding good day care a problem for your family? only 13 per cent of parents reported that it was "a major problem"; 69 per cent indicated it was "not a problem at all."

American families' strong, demonstrated preference for care by kin is consistent with the practices of every other human society that has ever existed and with the growing data on the effect of day care on children. In a January 1997 NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, Americans were asked to name the two or three most important issues facing the nation "that you personally would like to see the Federal Government in Washington do something about." Just 1 per cent said child care.

The day-care debate is often portrayed as pitting old-fashioned stay-at-home moms against the needs of modern working women. But the reality is that almost half of mothers of young children who work are not in the market for child care at all. A tax credit available only for commercial care—which is what President Clinton is set to propose—will bypass not only women who are homemakers, but all women who choose to keep their kids' care in the family—in other words, the vast majority of all American mothers of young children.

So who benefits from subsidized day care? There is one obvious answer: the day-care industry, a multi-billion-dollar concern which, like so many businesses, looks to use the power of government to increase its profits. To promote government subsidies only for those who use commercial child care is to push a service that is actively harmful for some children and one that most parents emphatically do not want. In other words, it is the kind of social policy only Washington could love. □

Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses.

Pro Hits 400-Yard Tee Shots During Test Round

Want To Shoot An Eagle or Two ?

By Mike Hensen

YALESVILLE, CT – A small golf company in Connecticut has created a powerful, new ball that flies like a U-2, putts with the steady roll of a cue ball and bites the green on approach shots like a dropped cat. But don't look for it on weekend TV. Long-hitting pros could make a joke out of some of golf's finest courses with it. One pro who tested the ball drove it 400 yards, reaching the green on all but the longest par-four's. Scientific tests by an independent lab using a hitting machine prove the ball out-distances ten major brands dramatically.

The ball's extraordinary distance comes partly from a revolutionary new dimple design that keeps the ball aloft longer. But there's also a secret change in the core that makes it rise faster off the clubhead. Another change reduces air drag. The result is a ball that gains altitude quickly, then sails like a glider. None of the changes is noticeable in the ball itself.

Despite this extraordinary performance, the company has a problem. A spokesman put it this way: "In golf you need endorsements and TV publicity. This is what gets you in the pro shops and stores where 95% of all golf products are sold. Unless the pros use your ball on TV, you're virtually locked out of these outlets. TV advertising is too expensive to buy on your own, at least for us.

"Now, you've seen how far this ball can fly. Can you imagine a pro using it on TV and eagle-ing par-four's? He would turn the course into a par-three, and real men don't play par-three's. This new fly-power forces us to sell it without relying on pros or pro-shops. One way is to sell it direct from our plant. That way we can keep the name printed on the ball a secret that only a buyer would know. There's more to golf than tournaments, you know."

The company guarantees a golfer a prompt refund if the new ball doesn't cut five to ten strokes off his or her average score. Simply return the balls–new or used–to the address below. "No one else would dare do that," boasted the company's director.

If you would like an eagle or two, here's your best chance yet. Write your name and address and "Code Name S" (the ball's R&D name) on a piece of paper and send it along with a check (or your credit card number and expiration date) to National Golf Center **(Dept. S-424)**, 60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. Or phone 800-285-3900 anytime. No P.O. boxes. One dozen "S" balls cost $24.95, two to five dozen are only $22.00 each, six dozen are only $109.00. You save $40.70 ordering six. Shipping and handling is only $4.50 no matter how large your order. Specify white or Hi-Vision yellow.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 1, 1998

Dear Rusty,

In 1998, I resolve: To spend more time with Tipper. (Especially in New Hampshire and Iowa.) To taper off the Macarena jokes. (Though they still crack me up.) To talk slower. (People have a hard time following me.) And finally, to raise $2,500,000.00 in party-building donations, and $1,500 per donor (the maximum individual contribution) for the Gore '00 Campaign. (I have to do it, Rusty. It's a rotten system, but, for now, it's the only system we've got.) Oh, also: I'm going to get a dog. Probably around Labor Day.

That last resolution, by the way, is actually Tipper's. I mean, Tipper's resolution for me, not Tipper's resolution for Tipper. She makes those, too, but I'm not allowed to see them.

She was thumbing through the Sunday paper last weekend when she announced it. "Al," she said, "it's time for a pet."

"You mean like Sid Blumenthal?" I asked.

Tipper's always thinking about politics and strategy, so she often talks in metaphor.

"No, Al," she said. "A dog. A faithful companion. An uncomplaining best friend who gives only unconditional love."

"You mean like Marty Peretz?" I asked. "Because if you do, I've got to tell you, Tipper, it sounds a lot closer to Sid."

She put down her paper. "Al," she said, "I mean an actual, literal dog. A four-legged furry creature with a big tongue and a wet nose and—"

"You mean like Donna Sha—"

"Al!" she shouted. "I mean a dog. Woof woof. Bow wow. Milk Bones. Alpo."

I thought for a minute. "Oh," I said. "Gotcha." She continued reading her paper. I kept on with my list of resolutions. I had just scratched out "use bald spot to engender sympathy from the press" when Tipper looked up from her paper. "Al?" she asked.

"What, Tip?"

"Don't you want to know why I think you should get a dog?"

She folded her paper in half and held it up for me to see. "This is why," she said, tapping a photograph of Bill cavorting around with his new puppy. His mouth was hanging open and his tongue was hanging out, and he looked really happy. The puppy was cute, too.

I shook my head. "Tipper," I said, "thanks for the advice, but I'm not sure I want to get a dog just because it'll make a good photo-op."

"Not a good photo-op, Al. A great photo-op."

"Okay, a great photo-op. Nevertheless, Tipper, I'm not getting a dog just for that. In the first place, I'm allergic."

"We'll put you on Hismanal."

"In the second place, they're messy. A dog would ruin this house."

"That's the Navy's problem," she said.

"And finally, I don't know how to housetrain a dog."

"Little Al will do it."

"No, Tipper," I said. I put my foot down, Rusty, and it felt great. I added a new resolution to my list: "Put foot down with Tipper more often."

"Fine. That's fine," she said, but I knew that she didn't think it was fine. She read her paper angrily, snapping the pages open and closed.

"Tipper," I said softly, "to be quite truthful, I think Bill's getting a dog is kind of crass. Everyone knows he's a cat guy. It's just another sign that he's checked out. He just wants to coast to the end of his term, looking presidential."

"Well, then," she snipped, "congratulations are in order. Because after six years in office, he finally does look presidential. It took a Labrador puppy to do it, but there you have it." She tossed the paper over to me.

"It's just beneath me, Tipper. It's shameless!" I said.

"Well, then by all means, Al, I wouldn't want you to do anything shameless, or beneath you. Why, that might upset you so much that you couldn't beg for money on the telephone or shake down Buddhist nuns."

"Low blow, Tip."

"Just look at the photo of him and that dog, Al."

I had to admit, Rusty, that he did look pretty presidential with that puppy. "Still," I told Tipper, "Bill's lost his direction, he's run out of gas. He's forgotten all about his progressive agenda."

She tapped the newspaper photograph again.

"Okay," I said, finally. "I'll get a dog." She smiled and leaned over her coffee cup and planted a big kiss on my lips. "But not anytime soon," I said. You can't just give in to everything, Rusty.

"Of course not, Al," Tipper said. "Let's wait until after Labor Day."

"Right," I said. You've got to be firm, Rusty, if you want to keep your resolutions.

Your pal, Al

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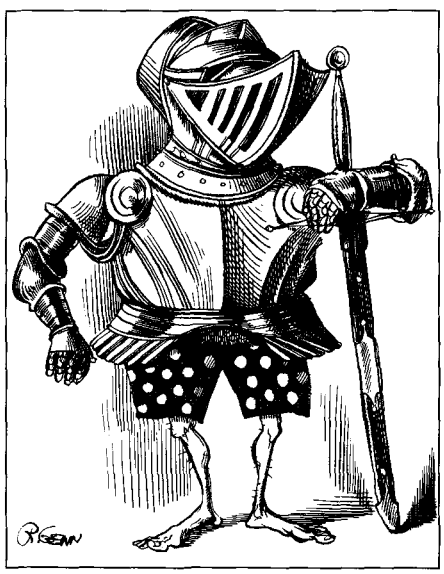
BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Heroism in a Politically Correct Age

NORMAN PODHORETZ

The following two essays are adapted from speeches given at a conference last month in honor of Margaret Thatcher. —DK

THERE is a saying in the Talmud: "Who is a hero? He who conquers his evil inclination." Nothing could be further from the ethos of our present culture. For much of this century heroism has been defined by the upper reaches of Western culture in antinomian terms. The word "antinomian" means against the law, and in the sphere of personal morality that translates into a complete submission to one's evil inclination. But in the antinomian view, what is regarded by the law as evil is redefined as good. Or as Milton's Satan, the most eloquent of all antinomians, puts it in *Paradise Lost*: "Evil be thou my Good." Satan of course is rebelling against God and God's law, and his followers throughout the centuries have worshipped him in ceremonies and rituals of inversion. Thus in the black mass, an obscene parody of the Catholic Mass, everything was turned on its head—the Lord's Prayer was read backward, the crucifix was hung upside down, and so on. There were different forms of the black mass in which various abominations were practiced, including child sacrifice. But in this context one of the most striking examples was the orgies that frequently accompanied these ceremonies. Not only did the Satanists defy the law in prescribing and practicing the ultimate in unchastity by indiscriminate coupling, but often they also featured anal intercourse, especially between men and women. Why? Because if the commandment of God is, "Be fruitful and multiply," the commandment of the Devil must be the opposite—"Be sterile and diminish." The way to fulfill this commandment to be sterile is through inverting the sexual act itself by directing it into the channel of excretion and waste, signifying death, instead of the channel of propagation and birth, signifying life.



Antinomianism has had its ups and downs throughout history, and as with so much else that has been destructive in our own day, the decade of the 1960s was a high point in its resurgence after a spell of relative quiescence. The rock group the Rolling Stones, who in their now doddering condition are still packing them in, sang of their "sympathy for the Devil." On a higher rung of the cultural ladder, poets like Allen Ginsburg, novelists like Norman Mailer, and philosophers like Norman O. Brown preached the pursuit of instant gratification as the road to individual and social salvation. Mailer in particular celebrated the type he called the hipster, who, so far from trying to become a hero by conquering his evil inclinations, actually became a hero by indulging them to the full. Mailer even substituted the hipster, whom he frankly acknowledged to be a psychopathic personality, for the proletariat in the new revolution he saw in the making. This new revolution, unlike the Marxist one that had failed by being too rationalistic, would move, in his words, "backward toward being and the secrets of human energy."

Ginsburg for his part celebrated the mad as the truly sane and homosexuality as the best path to sexual fulfillment. But he also recognized—at least at certain moments—that homosexuality had a two-sided etiology. Men became homosexual not only because they were attracted to other men, but also as an expression of the desperate desire to avoid being mired in the messy stream of life into which they are inevitably yanked when they get involved with women. (I myself would argue that antinomianism reaches its apogee in the kind of feminism which professes to believe that all differences between men and women are socially conditioned rather than biologically inbred, but more of that later.) As for Brown, his antinomian utopia was a life of what he called polymorphous perversity, which meant treating the entire body, not just the genitals, as sexual organs and giving them full-time full play.

So much for the realm of personal morality. In politics, this same antinomian impulse has manifested itself in revolutionary movements which declare that the laws of a given society are not legitimate and that the true or higher law requires overturning them by violence. So powerful has this ethos been in the realm of politics that the words "rebel" and "radical" have become—and still remain—terms of approbation. The discrediting of Communism, and the mountains of corpses piled up and the oceans of blood shed by the revolutions made in its name—

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even all that has not dimmed the luster of the image of the rebel, the radical, the revolutionist, and even the terrorist.

Yet a curious dialectic has been at work here. At the very same time that the hero has been conceived as a rebel against the law, the idea has been put forth—and often by the same people—that there is no such thing as a hero at all. Out of this idea comes the image of the antihero, who has dominated so much of the literature of the twentieth century. The antihero is not a servant of Satan or of evil redefined as good; he is not a rebel but rather a nihilist who (as the Marxists used to say, and still do in the universities, where the only remaining members of this endangered species are to be found) "demystifies" or (as the currently fashionable schools of critical theory would put it) "deconstructs" the very idea of the hero.

At the very same time that the hero has been conceived as a rebel against the law, the idea has been put forth—and often by the same people—that there is no such thing as a hero at all.

Now, this idea used to be the very essence of comedy. Tragedy presented us with figures who may not have been virtuous in the moral sense but who were certainly virtuous in the literal sense of possessing in an unusual degree what used to be thought of as the great manly qualities of strength, courage, and honor. The first two of these qualities they would use to defend the third, usually unto death, and they were offered up to us for admiration on that account. But the comic impulse was always there, ready to act as a subversive force. As Milton's Satan is perhaps the greatest of the antinomian heroes, Shakespeare's Falstaff is the greatest of the comic antiheroes. "What is honor?" he asks, and answers, "A word. What is that word, honor? Air. . . . Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday." This is why his great playmate, Prince Hal, must renounce and repudiate Falstaff when he becomes Henry V and finally recognizes that, as he confesses, "if it be a sin to covet honor/I am the most offending soul alive." And so, just after his coronation, he cruelly casts Falstaff out: "I know thee not, old man," he tells him. For if he had not turned his back on Falstaff and everything Falstaff represents, he could never have become, as Henry V, the king who leads his men into a bloody battle at Agincourt by telling them that "gentlemen in England now abed/Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here/And hold their manhoods cheap."

Today the antihero lives on in comedy, well exemplified by the character usually played by Woody Allen. But what is most noteworthy is that there is no longer a Henry V against whom he stands. Instead of being banished, Falstaff is now the one who does the banishing and holds the entire stage to himself. Thanks in large part to World War I, the generation of the Twenties and Thirties throughout the West became completely disenchanted with the old manly ideals and left us all with a legacy of deep skepticism toward them. No one seemed capable any longer of talking with a straight face about honor and courage, words that had, it was thought, led to so much senseless slaughter. In the Victorian era Tennyson could write a hymn to the six hundred who rode into the valley of death, but a poet of the post–World War I period trying to do something similar would have been laughed out of existence, if not indeed stoned to death.

To some extent, World War II, the good war, the war that everyone (or almost everyone) thought was being fought in a noble cause, temporarily rehabilitated the reputation of the manly virtues. But only temporarily. In due course even World War II fell victim to the onslaught of the antiheroic ethos that was resurrected in the Sixties and given even greater currency by Vietnam. Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* is the key document here. Though published in the early days of American involvement in Vietnam, *Catch-22* was a product of the new climate, and so powerful was this climate already becoming that Heller not only got away with but was even applauded for what a few years earlier would have been thought virtually blasphemous—showing up World War II as in effect no different from or better than World War I. As Heller portrayed it, there were no heroes in that war; there were only victims of a racket run by idiots, hustlers, and thieves. Not even Falstaff, *mutatis mutandis*, outdid Heller in his ridicule of the idea of honor.

In the meantime we were flooded with stories and novels by the likes of Ann Beattie about young people who saw no point in doing much of anything even in their personal lives. To these shell-shocked—or rather drug-addled—survivors of the Sixties, concepts like courage and honor had simply fallen off the radar screen. There was no need to mock them, since they had already become invisible. And if perchance they made a surprise appearance somewhere, they were looked upon with blank incomprehension.

SO, to the antinomian assault on the traditional concept of heroism was added the kindred but still distinct cynical or nihilistic assault on it. And this had an interesting effect. As Michiko Kakutani has pointed out in *The New York Times Magazine*, it has even robbed the Devil himself of heroic stature. She writes:

> In the new Al Pacino movie, *Devil's Advocate*, . . . Milton's majestic archangel, whose "stature reached the sky," has devolved into a slick Manhattan fixer [whose name, incidentally, is John Milton], the head of a law firm that does things like get rich murderers off the hook. Whereas Lucifer once waged an all-out war in heaven against God Himself, he now has his hands full seducing ambitious yuppies, who are happy to sell out—not for knowledge or creative powers, like earlier Fausts, but for cushy apartments on Fifth Avenue and some corporate perks.

Miss Kakutani goes on to point out that most other recent Devils in American fiction have been similarly reduced. In T. Coraghessan Boyle, Satan seduces Wall Street types who want fancy cars. In John Updike he becomes "a tennis-playing art collector who uses his demonic powers to lure local divorcees into his hot tub." In Jeremy Leven, he becomes "a masochist suffering from paranoia and an inferiority complex."

In other words, even the antinomian hero, the only hero left to us by our present culture, has been turned into an antihero playing games of trivial pursuit.

But here we come to a complication, for when we descend—or should I in this context say ascend?—into the realm of popular culture, heroes in the traditional sense abound. John Wayne, the prototype, is still, almost twenty years after his death, one of the most popular of all movie

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stars, superseded among the living only by his own cinematic heirs Clint Eastwood and Mel Gibson.

What this tells us is that the hunger for heroism remains, and when the upper reaches of the culture decide to starve it of genuine nutrition, the lower reaches will step in and offer it a banquet of junk food. I would be the last to deny that some of this junk food—like McDonald's hamburgers—tastes good. But O for "a little touch of Harry in the night"!

The question is whether we—or rather our children and grandchildren—will ever get it again. Not, I fear, if the feminization of our culture that the women's movement has been laboring to achieve should proceed apace. But my guess is that this campaign has already begun to encounter more resistance than it was running into up until very recently. This resistance is coming perhaps even more from women than from men.

To be sure, the leaders of the feminist movement, having already feminized so many other institutions in our society, have set their sights on purging even the armed forces of what a high female official of the Defense Department derisively called "macho culture." For this, far from being fired, she was praised, and it was only when she later denounced the Marines as "extremist" that she had to apologize and resign.

Yet other women, desperate to marry before their biological clocks run down, can more and more be heard complaining that all the men out there are either "wimps" or gays. It has been said that men are born aggressive and predatory and that only women can tame and civilize them, which is true. But it is also true that if women fail to demand that men be strong, and courageous, and honorable—if, that is, they fail to live by the dictum that "only the brave deserve the fair"—then they will find no one worth bestowing their favors upon. No doubt they will—human nature being what it is—perforce bestow their favors on, or at least resignedly decide to marry, the wimps they secretly despise. But there will be no more touches of Harry in their nights, or indeed in anyone else's. □

A Remembrance Of Heroes Past

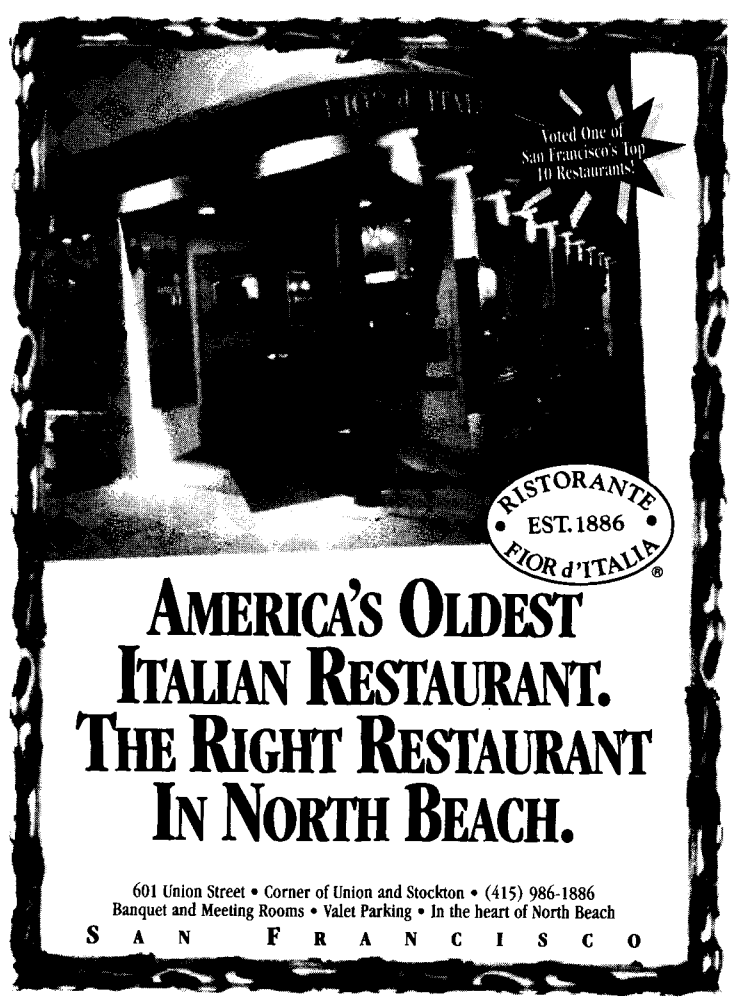
GEORGE MACDONALD FRASER

I THINK most people would agree that this is not a heroic age. Occasional individual heroisms there are, of course, but the present generation is not in sympathy with heroism as I understand the word. I was a child of empire, so my heroes were mostly people like Drake and Livingstone, Nelson and Kit Carson, Joan of Arc and Robert Bruce, Hereward and Harriet Tubman, the defenders of Rorke's Drift and the Alamo, the Light Brigade, my own Highland ancestors, and those almost-forgotten fliers of the Great War—Bishop, Ball, Rickenbacker, McCudden, and others. Service as a foot-soldier in Burma in the Second World War did not alter my views, for the men of the XIVth Army seemed to be cut from the same cloth as my boyhood heroes. They were men of action who prized the same old-fashioned virtues, judged matters (more or less) by the same standards, shared the same hopes for themselves and their country, and had the same unspoken notions of loyalty and personal honor. But like my heroes of old, while grateful tribute is paid to them on anniversaries, they and their values belong to the past.

For one thing, they were not politically correct. Indeed, when I think back on that platoon of hard-bitten Cumbrians, they look as politically incorrect as it is humanly possible to be. They had hopelessly reactionary views on crime and punishment and discipline, believing in an eye for an eye, and believing that you paid for your faults and mistakes, and you might, with luck, be rewarded for your virtues but shouldn't count on it. They expressed no views on human rights, their own or anyone else's; their concern with the environment was limited to wondering how many Japanese it might conceal. They had immense pride, which led them to hide their fears and to take hardship and pain and even death in their stride—not without loud and obscene complaint, mind you, but without expectation of special treatment or consideration; the notion of crying on anyone's shoulder, or of giving way to self-pitying emotion, they would have thought shameful. By today's standards they were hard, uncharitable, uncivilized, even un-Christian men; they had no compassion for their enemy, only a deep abiding hatred; they believed that the only good Jap was a dead one.

They understood that he had the same point of view, and

Mr. Fraser is the author of the Flashman series of novels.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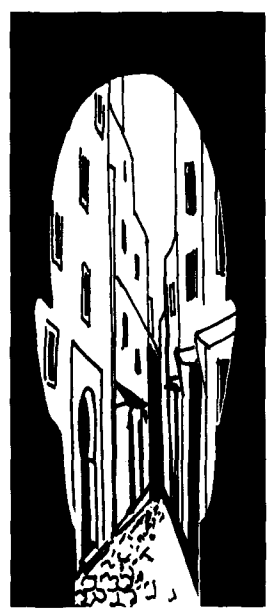
besides hating they respected and even admired him. It goes without saying that they were guilty of the only unpardonable modern sin, being racists (as if that made them different from anyone else since time began), but they were racists who had a loyalty to their Indian and African and Chinese and Burmese and Afghan and Gurkha comrades which no modern liberal could even begin to understand.

No, they were not politically correct. But then, neither were Drake and Livingstone and Kit Carson—or Washington and Jefferson, or for that matter Abraham Lincoln. And how I wish sometimes that that great and kindly man could be reincarnated, if only so that he could explain his views on race relations to an audience of today's politically correct.

How the Battle of Britain pilots, or the American seamen at Midway, or the Russians at Stalingrad, got by without 'counseling' we can only guess.

Actually, it wouldn't faze them in the least. They would probably think he was kidding, for the twin pillars of political correctness are willful ignorance and a steadfast refusal to face the truth if it doesn't fit with what the politically correct wish to believe. At worst this involves them in deliberate lying, at best in *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. At its most innocent, political correctness can be touchingly naïve: just last month I noticed the slogan on a tray of poppies being sold for Remembrance Day. It read: "A caring force for the future." Plainly someone wants to think of the army as a sort of humanitarian organization taking care of people (which, indeed, can be one of its roles) but doesn't like to face the brutal truth, that an army's ultimate function is killing people. I take no satisfaction in that truth, but I know that the day we forget it, for the sake of feeling cozy and comfortable, we are on the way to suicide.



As for those values I mentioned above—those of my long-dead heroes, which were still honored in my generation—courage, certainly, is still admired but not quite, perhaps, in the way it was. Recently a young Englishwoman, a nursery-school teacher, defended her charges against a maniac who was trying to kill them with a machete. She saved the children; she was a heroine, no question—and her name was coupled in the press and in public admiration with that of a mother who had spent years working to bring to book the murderers of her son. Now I have unbounded admiration for that mother, and for the determination with which she pursued justice, but I have difficulty putting her in the same category with the young teacher who without hesitation laid her life on the line for her pupils. It seems to me that the definition of heroism is being blurred. We have in Britain an annual award ceremony for Children of Courage. Some are children who have coped bravely with a disability; others have done something actively heroic. I'm not minimizing the fortitude of the disabled children when I say that it seems there are two different kinds of courage here, and that to pretend that they are not different is to encourage, however unwittingly, the idea of the victim as hero.

That is something which is gaining ground in our culture, the conferment of heroic or semi-heroic status on someone who has suffered grievous misfortune or loss. We saw a remarkable example of this in the near-hysterical reaction to the tragic death of the Princess of Wales. No doubt many were, to use the fashionable word, devastated, and there certainly was throughout the world a deep and genuine regret for a young life so dreadfully blotted out; there was also in Britain an unprecedented media-manufactured campaign in which the public, including the Royal Family, was virtually blackmailed not merely into mourning, but into mourning in the way which the media dictated. What C. S. Forester so cruelly and accurately described as lower-deck sentimentality had a field day, culminating in the event at Westminster Abbey. Mr. Blair felt proud. I felt ashamed. Perhaps it was the contrast between the vast carpets of flowers outside the palaces and the modest, decent tributes laid at the cenotaphs on Remembrance Day each November; perhaps it was the reflection that a heroic figure second to none in our century, Churchill, received no such monumental outpouring of grief at his passing—and wouldn't have wanted it. He might have wondered what change had come over his nation to make such an extravagant demonstration possible, and why grief, or the manifestation of grief, should now be regarded as something noble.

For grieving has become a positive virtue, and the response to tragedy, and especially to fatal crime, has become a ritual: the florists' shops must be stripped so that tributes can be strewn at the scene; there must be tears and harrowing interviews for the cameras; the tragedy must be denounced as unacceptable; swarms of so-called "counselors" must be called in to mouth their platitudes; above all, everyone must be seen to be mourning. It is a splendid substitute for actually doing something to prevent repetition of the tragedy, which all too often nowadays is the horrific murder of a child. But of course doing something effective about that would certainly be politically incorrect. Lip service to grief is so much easier.

My generation was lucky. Grieving was not a virtue or a duty then. When a schoolfellow died there was a quick word of sympathy from our teacher, and life went on. No counselors arrived to damage our young minds by harping on the tragedy or insisting that we "come to terms" with it. But counseling today is a thriving business. Firefighters are counseled, and sometimes even awarded large sums in compensation, just for doing their jobs; when a young policewoman is fatally stabbed, it is suggested that her male colleagues may need counseling for the trauma they have suffered. How the Battle of Britain pilots, or the American seamen at Midway, or the Russians at Stalingrad, got by without "counseling" we can only guess.

SO how did the cult of the hero come to be replaced, at least in Britain, by the cult of the victim? How did the nation that shed its blood in a hundred wars and fed its seas for a thousand years and endured Flanders and the Blitz and was accustomed to burying its dead with a quick

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salute and carrying on, undergo such an apparent decay of the spirit?

I don't know. I've heard it suggested that loss of empire, and the consequent loss of a heroic spirit, is a partial explanation. I suppose you can hardly lose control of one-quarter of the human race and one-fifth of the world's land surface, and command of its oceans, without a few withdrawal symptoms. But I wouldn't have expected them to be quite so traumatic, or the reversal of national outlook to be so complete. We are even meant to apologize for the past. Our new prime minister recently apologized for the Irish famine. I didn't know he had caused it. And since we know he didn't, we can only conclude that he accepts the monstrously dangerous, stupid, and incidentally racist concept of inherited racial guilt. This is political correctness run barking mad. I daresay the Native Americans (a term, by the way, invented by Theodore Roosevelt to describe Americans of European descent) have demanded that the United States apologize for Sand Creek and Washita and Wounded Knee. But have the Native Americans ever apologized for Fort William Henry and Fort Venango and the Pontiac Conspiracy? But of course political correctness demands that only one side of the coin be looked at.

Of one thing I am sure: my country needs heroes now—and I don't see any coming up. But it is some consolation that even in this unheroic age, when my old comrades of the XIVth Army can be pelted and insulted with jeers of "Heil Hitler!" at a Remembrance Day parade, and when so much of my nation's worthy past is devalued—in such a time it is comforting to remember that not so long ago there was someone who was in no doubt what it meant to be British, and stood firm when it mattered, at the time of the Falklands. It can't have been easy; there were faint hearts and dissenting voices, and even some who seemed more concerned for the enemy's casualties than for our own; fortunately they were not around in 1940 to agonize about the human rights of the Luftwaffe. Anyway, she stood firm, as precious few men would have done; she did not go wobbly. And for that, on behalf of a damfool generation, and in the language of the XIVth Army, I'd like to say, "*Shabash, memsahib.*" Which being translated means, "Bravo, lady." □

The (Scientific) Case for God

STEPHEN M. BARR

PATRICK Glynn, a political journalist and former Reagan Administration official, has given us an elegantly written and absorbing account of his return to religious faith and the reasons for it. A major reason was the "significant body of evidence" which has emerged from "a series of dramatic developments in science, medicine, and other fields" in the last twenty years that "has radically changed the existence-of-God debate."

Gerald Schroeder, an Israeli physicist, has followed a similar path. He writes: "As a scientist trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I was convinced I had the evidence to exclude [God] from the grand scheme of life." But "with each step forward" he took in his understanding of science, "something kept shining through."

One may be tempted to object that "The Evidence," as the title of Glynn's book calls it, goes back a lot longer than twenty years. St. Paul knew nothing of modern science and yet felt justified in asserting in his Epistle to the Romans that God's "eternal power and deity," though invisible, are "manifest in the things that He has made." Faith does not need to wait upon the latest research. Nevertheless, Glynn and Schroeder are right that something important has happened in the world of science.

What has happened is that the great scientific discoveries which seemed to many thoughtful people to provide reasons for skepticism and even atheism have been shown to be either misleading or mistaken. To borrow a phrase from Ben Wattenberg, the good news is that the bad news is wrong.

God: The Evidence: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World, by Patrick Glynn (Prima Publishing, 221 pp., $22)

The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom, by Gerald L. Schroeder (Free Press, 226 pp., $25)

The bad news is old and well known. Copernicus showed that we humans are not at the center of the universe—though, as Schroeder points out, the Bible never actually said we were. And Darwin—supposedly—showed that we are merely the products of chance mutations. Glynn quotes Bertrand Russell's dismal conclusion: the human race is just "a curious accident in a backwater." Galileo, besides embarrassing the Roman Catholic Church, helped bring about the triumph of mechanism over teleology, which, as Glynn notes, "went hand in hand with the decline of religious faith among the intellectual elite." It was no longer scientifically respectable to look for purpose in Nature.

What has put these discoveries in a different light is more recent developments in the very same branches of science. From physics and cosmology have come the "anthropic coincidences." This term refers to the fact, now widely appreciated by physicists, that many features of the laws of nature seem arranged so as to make possible the emergence of life. For example, if certain parameters of the "Standard Model" of particle physics were even slightly different from what they are measured to be, either stars would never have formed or biochemistry would not be possible. Many of these anthropic coincidences are striking indeed, and have led at least a few scientists to reconsider their atheistic prejudices.

Glynn discusses anthropic coincidences at much greater length than does Schroeder. He observes that there are two ways out for the faithful atheist. One of them is to argue that the features of nature's laws which the deist and theist think were arranged may actually be inflexibly determined by some deep underlying principles. While this is very likely to be true, it hardly resolves the issue, since the structure of physical law did not have to be based upon those particular principles. The other way out is to posit the existence

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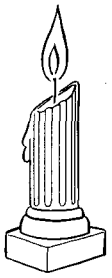
of an infinite number of universes (or domains of this universe) where the laws of physics assume a variety of forms. In this scenario one could argue that there was bound to be *some* universe or domain where the conditions would happen to be favorable for life. Though I think Glynn's response to this idea is not completely satisfactory, he is quite right to emphasize that these postulated universes or domains are almost certainly unobservable experimentally. They are, therefore, just as vulnerable to a positivist critique as any theological assertion ever was. The breathtakingly speculative character of these multiple-universe ideas provokes this telling observation from Glynn:



> Praising science at the expense of religion in 1935, Bertrand Russell boasted: "The scientific temper of mind is cautious, tentative, and piecemeal. The way in which science arrives at its beliefs is quite different," [Russell] wrote, "from that of medieval theology. . . . Science starts, not from large assumptions, but from particular facts discovered by observation or experiment." Well, we've come a long way baby.

Developments in biology are likewise making it harder to believe that our existence is as "accidental" as Russell supposed. Glynn steers clear of evolutionary debates, but Schroeder has a great deal to say about them that is of interest. Schroeder argues that recent discoveries, relating in particular to the rapidity of certain evolutionary changes, make it appear doubtful that random mutations and natural selection are the whole story. He backs up his arguments with some interesting mathematics. He suggests, as others have done, that evolution is "channeled" in definite directions by the underlying principles of physics and chemistry. If so, evolution may be less a matter of randomness and more a matter of potentialities built into the laws of nature.

Before evolution in the ordinary sense can even begin, one needs a living thing. Schroeder recalls for us the great sensation created in 1953 by the experiments of Miller and Urey, which appeared to show that the origin of life from inorganic chemicals was a simple and almost solved problem. A frustrating half-century later it is generally admitted that the origin of life is a problem of surpassing difficulty.

In cosmology, the bad news has also turned out to be wrong. Up through the nineteenth century, developments in physics suggested that the universe was infinitely old. Schroeder relates that as late as 1959, two-thirds of leading American astronomers and physicists surveyed still believed that the universe had no beginning. Only in the 1960s did science at last vindicate the reality of that "Beginning" of which the Book of Genesis spoke three thousand years ago.

One of the worst pieces of bad news for religion was the determinism of the laws of physics, for which evidence had been mounting for three centuries. If the state of the world at one time is determined by its state at a previous time, then our brains are not free. With the advent of quantum mechanics in the 1920s, however, physics was forced to abandon strict determinism.

Science has even had to backpedal on the very nature of religious belief itself. Freud diagnosed it as a neurosis. Yet, as Glynn recounts, numerous recent studies have shown that religious belief and practice correlate very strongly with overall happiness, psychological well-being, and marital satisfaction, and with markedly *low* rates of suicide, divorce, drug use, alcoholism, stress, depression, and a variety of related physical ailments.

BOTH of these books succeed brilliantly in building bridges between science and religion, but each, in its own way, goes a bridge too far. Glynn devotes a long section of his book to "near-death experiences," which he regards as direct evidence of the existence of the soul and of an afterlife. Although Glynn probably makes as good a case as can be made, it is possible, even for those of us who do not doubt the immortality of the soul, to remain unconvinced that the near-death phenomena are supernatural in origin.

The typical subject of an "autoscopic" near-death experience reports leaving his body, floating up into the air, and observing the medical procedures being performed upon him. "Observing *with what*?" one is bound to ask. The subjects of such experiences, if truly disembodied, have no retinas or other sensory apparatus with which to see the colors and shapes that they describe. (It is not reported whether the myopic among them are accompanied by their spectacles upon these excursions.) It would make more sense to suppose that such people are being granted a vision of what they *would* see could they look down upon the operation. However, it seems a funny kind of vision for God to grant, consisting of the knobs and dials on medical equipment. More plausibly supernatural are near-death experiences of the other kind, the "transcendental" ones, which involve visits to Heaven. Yet nothing precludes a purely naturalistic explanation—perhaps in psychoanalytic terms—of them either.

In the 1960s scientists at last vindicated the reality of the 'Beginning' of which the Book of Genesis spoke three thousand years ago.

Schroeder's book is less about science and faith generally than about science and the Bible, and especially its first five books, the Torah. What he says about Scriptural interpretation is generally wise. He wittily suggests that we should "give unto Einstein what is Einstein's and unto the Bible what is the Bible's." Much of his exegesis, which often depends on the analysis of particular Hebrew words, is illuminating and profound. Even his less convincing efforts are quite ingenious. However, his determination to find a scientific explanation for every period of time mentioned in the Bible, from the Six Days of creation to antediluvian lifespans, leads to some rather curious results. He attempts to show that the Six Days are really the *same* as the 15 billion years of modern cosmology, using a strange blend of medieval *cabala* and the "time-dilation effect" of relativity theory. He violates his own maxim here, giving unto Einstein what really belongs to the mystical numerology of the rabbi Nahmanides.

Not everything in these books is of equal value, but the story they tell, so personally, so learnedly, and in such fascinating detail, could hardly be more important. The modern mind was tragically rent by the scientific findings of an earlier era. These books show that science may help to join what once it put asunder. □

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Nationalism Review

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE average intelligent American who wants to learn something about history does not get much help from the political class. The Left projects identity politics backward, in a pageant of saintly martyrs. We of the Right offer little more: here, some remnants of the Army of Northern Virginia; there, the West Coast Straussians, riding between the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address like passengers on the shuttle between Grand Central Station and Times Square. *Hamilton's Republic*, edited by Michael Lind—an anthology of short excerpts from the writing of various Federalists, Whigs, and turn-of-the-last-century Republicans, with an idiosyncratic twentieth-century coda—has the virtue of offering something fresh. If Mr. Lind had his way, Mount Rushmore would get some new faces, and pundits and speechwriters would find a new source for bumperstickers.

Hamilton's Republic: Readings in the American Democratic Nationalist Tradition, edited by Michael Lind (Free Press, 345 pp., $25)

Mr. Lind is not primarily concerned with expanding our frame of reference. He argues that his selections present a vision of America as a country with a foreign policy based on self-interest, an industrialized and often state-encouraged economy, and an ethnic melting pot, all held together by a strong national government, and finding its most recent fulfillment in the Presidencies of Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson. *Hamilton's Republic* is a hostile gloss on Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s *The Age of Jackson*: Schlesinger tried to trace the New Deal to Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. Michael Lind wants to trace the Great Society to Henry Clay.

Lind begins with Alexander Hamilton, thereby performing a useful service. Hamilton's papers have been available in a modern scholarly edition for years (a project that was finished so quickly, its editor, Harold Syrett, joked, thanks to Aaron Burr). But the only item in Hamilton's output that is readily available is his contribution to the *Federalist Papers*. Lind dips into the *Federalist*, the "Report on Manufactures," and the "Pacificus" letters, a sober warning against American Francophilia at the height of the French Revolution.

The most interesting of the thematically organized sections that follow is the one on foreign policy and defense, and its star is Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, commenting on American idealism during the early days of World War I:

> Nothing will be accomplished by people who are sheltered under neutrality . . . summoning the combatants to throw down their arms and make peace because war is filled with horrors and women are the mothers of men. The nations and the men now fighting . . . for their lives and freedom and national existence know all this better than anyone else, and would heed such babble, if they heard it, no more than the twittering of the birds.

The section on nationalism and culture is more variable, placing some eloquent blacks—abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet, author Jean Toomer—alongside white blowhards like playwright Israel Zangwill and (on this subject, anyway) Theodore Roosevelt. Here is TR, working over Henry James: "the undersized man of letters, who flees this country because he, with his delicate, effeminate sensitiveness . . . cannot play a man's part among men."

The section on economics seeks instruction in American practice. American trade policy throughout the nineteenth century was at least moderately protectionist, and Lind's authors try to justify this status quo theoretically. Some confusion of tongues results: Hamilton wanted tariffs to protect new industries, Henry C. Carey (a nineteenth-century publisher and economist) wanted them as bargaining chips to break down the tariffs of other countries, Lodge wanted them to keep out the goods of low-wage countries like China (Lodge's blast could be Xeroxed and passed out on Capitol Hill today).

Mr. Brookhiser is a senior editor at NR.

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Does all of this run as smoothly as Lind thinks into modern liberalism—even a liberalism purged, as Lind would like it to be, of pacifism and multiculturalism? Clearly something changed between the "general welfare" clause of the Constitution and the welfare state. Roughly speaking, Lind's earlier heroes wanted to help employers; FDR wanted to help the unemployed; LBJ wanted to help the unemployable. Alexander Hamilton, who supported taxing the poor to make them work, and who liked factories because they exploited the labor of women and children (sentiments not quoted here) would be puzzled by the progeny Lind has fathered on him.

A blast from Henry Cabot Lodge on trade policy and China could be Xeroxed and passed out on Capitol Hill today.

Lind is also unnecessarily harsh on Hamilton's great rival, Thomas Jefferson. Lind chides the third President for holding fanciful notions of minimal government, unrealistic attitudes on foreign policy, and crackpot views on race. These criticisms are just. But Jefferson and his supporters were also pioneers of the rhetoric of resentment and class hostility, assailing their enemies (Lind's heroes) as tools of bankers and secret monarchists. The same arguments, suitably updated, have served Democrats in the twentieth century (who are also Lind's heroes). It seems ungracious of Lind to disdain the man who furnished FDR with so many useful tropes.

But these are quibbles. *Hamilton's Republic* is worth reading because it expands our views, and because nationalism is a hot property, whose claimants are worth keeping track of. In a widely read essay in the *Wall Street Journal* on "National Greatness Conservatism," William Kristol and David Brooks of *The Weekly Standard* put some of Lind's characters to rather different uses. Pat Buchanan has been worrying this question for years. So has NATIONAL REVIEW. What is a nation-state good for? What degree of statism does it imply? Who gets to belong? What can we learn about these questions from our past? Stay tuned. □

FILM

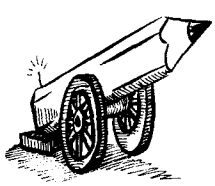
Bagging the Biggies

JOHN SIMON

REMEMBER Kevin Costner's waterlogged *Waterworld*? In that apocalyptic stinker, post-Armageddon remnants of humanity jetsamed it up on the seven seas; in the current superturkey, ***The Postman***, we get a rerun on dry land. In the new dystopia, the United States is, by 2013, mostly unpeopled desolation, though an abandoned car, vacant house, or thriving township pops up whenever required to help Costner and the preposterous plot along. The actor-director seems determined to appear as the savior of the world, although the world has yet to figure out how to save itself from him.

As customary, an army of vicious marauders, here called Holnists and led by the beastly General Bethlehem, terrorizes the few remaining civilized communities. On horseback like the Huns, they exact inordinate tribute and abduct men for soldiering, women for lust. There is no one to oppose them, except, of course, Costner. A loner who was forcibly conscripted into the Holnists but managed to escape, he finds in an abandoned jeep a postman's uniform and a pouch full of old undelivered letters. To get food and shelter from the surviving towns, he assumes the role of the Postman, a representative of the supposedly restored United States Government.

Just how he manages to deliver the letters and even bring back replies is left vague, but mail delivery spells deliverance for him and all. Before long, other young men and women are having him anoint them as subsidiary postmen, only to have Bethlehem and the Holnists vow to destroy them and those who harbor them. I cannot begin to go into the details of this, after much last-minute cutting, three-and-a-quarter-hour movie, but I can assure you that, despite some unintended belly laughs, it provides little but self-indulgent flimflam.



Thus, in a sheltering town, Abby, a stunning young woman, accosts Postman Costner with the question, "So, as far as you know, you've got good semen?" It seems her beloved young husband has had "the bad mumps," which leaves you infertile. Postner, as for the sake of brevity I shall call him, hesitates, but when Abby disrobes and invades his bed, even he proves only flesh and blood. Conveniently, his good semen impregnates Abby on the first try; later, her husband is equally conveniently killed when he tries to stop Bethlehem from carrying her off. In this ravaged but ideal world, Bethlehem, much as he tries to possess her, remains impotent. Rescued later on, Abby, much as she tries to remain faithful to her husband's memory, cannot resist the Postner, just like those weak men who finance these dreadful Costner movies.

Mention must be made of the wit in this screenplay by Eric Roth and Brian Helgeland. When the Postner tries to persuade the people that order has been re-established, he lies to them about Broadway again mounting shows by Andrew Floyd (*sic*) Webber. Equally fetching is the allegory, as when Abby's child is presented as "My daughter: her name is Hope." (Costner, a good father, has cast his real-life children in the movie.)

Costner is heartwarming as the reluctant redeemer; as Bethlehem, the Dick Cavettish Will Patton knows Shakespeare and Latin tags, and smiles as he murders. As Abby, the young English actress Olivia Williams is much more than Costner deserves. Imagine a fellow not above calling his monster movie by the same title as that warmly remembered intimate charmer *Il Postino*. Couldn't he at least have had the decency to call his film *The Mailman*?

■ As superproductions go, ***Kundun***, Martin Scorsese's film biography of the Dalai Lama, is relatively restrained, respectful, contemplative. But it is also, like most authorized biographies, anaesthetizing. Scorsese, an action director, is

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not the man for the job, though he and his valiant cinematographer, Roger Deakins, strive mightily to keep the camera moving around with an exploratory voluptuousness, as if there were something of consuming interest going on. The sense of reverence is so acute that the movie becomes a kind of smellie, exuding the odor of sanctity.

As the new Bond, Pierce Brosnan is slick and dapper, but more like a fashion model than the perfect amalgam of brain, brawn, and heart.

The sundry Tibetan non-actors corralled in a worldwide search do very nicely, and Dante Ferretti's costume and production designs are equally praiseworthy. Inevitably, one must compare *Kundun* with *Seven Years in Tibet*: we have a choice now between the Lhasa that Jean-Jacques Annaud's team built in the Andes, and the Lhasa that Scorsese's crew erected in Morocco. Each Lhasa has virtues the other lacks, as well as fully competitive Dalai Lamas. *Kundun*, to be sure, gives you more of the Dalai Lama's life up to his escape to India; it is also, however discreetly, more explicit about the Chinese conquest and atrocities.

There is a glimpse or two of family life, and a little of Tibetan folkways, but, for example, only one woman, the D.L.'s mother, played by her own granddaughter. Even more than in Annaud's film, though, we get a sense of peering at Tibet through a keyhole, with the limited vantage that affords. The D.L. is shown at ages two, five, and twelve, and as a young adult. He is allowed some childish impetuosity and stubbornness but, once grown, is as pure as the snow atop the Himalayas (or, in this case, the Atlas Mountains), and as brave and devoted to his people as you would expect the living Buddha to be. The dialogue is often strange enough to feel authentic, e.g., this about the Chinese: "They are the worst of the worst—they are worse than ghosts."

Luckily there are some closeups of clothing, crafts, and architecture as well as panoramic shots of nature's grandeur. There is a good deal of native music, which sounds quaint, augmented by a Philip Glass score, which is dismal. I sometimes found it hard to orient myself among all those Oriental faces, and some of the film's finer points (screenplay by Melissa Mathison, Mrs. Harrison Ford, best known for *E.T.*) may have escaped my crude Western sensibility. But I marveled steadily at the production design and camera work, while learning that *Kundun* means "the presence" (of the Buddha, presumably) and Dalai Lama "ocean of wisdom." Whether that makes the lesser lamas oceans or wisdoms remains unclear.

■ Ian Fleming died long ago. "Cubby" Broccoli, the producer of the many James Bond movies, died more recently. Fondly I hoped that 007, too, would go to his Maker or at least into retirement. But here is the 18th Bond movie, aptly titled ***Tomorrow Never Dies***, from a relatively new 007 writer, Bruce Feirstein, and a new 007 director, Roger Spottiswoode. *Plus ça change* does not quite apply, though. The villains are much the same, the double-entendres ditto, the array of excogitated gadgets ditto, and the sex with dazzling women ditto.

What has changed is the protagonist. No one since Sean Connery has had quite that blend of ruggedness and suavity, of imperturbability and feeling. Pierce Brosnan, the incumbent, is slick and dapper enough but lacks weight and depth. Rather too pretty, he is more like a fashion model than the perfect amalgam of brain, brawn, and heart.

This decline is mirrored also in the language. Oh, the risqué jokes are still there. An urgent phone call from Miss Moneypenny (the aptly named Samantha Bond) catches 007 in bed with a Nordic blonde. He answers the questions about his whereabouts with "studying Danish." Comments Miss M.: "You always were a cunning linguist, James." But I doubt whether the old Bond would have said, as this one does, "If only that were true of you and I." This two-hour triumph of the gimmick and gizmo, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, feels more like The End Never Comes. □

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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DELECTATIONS

Frequent-Flier Feasts

ANDREW OLIVER

THE most terrifying sound a passenger hears on a plane is typically that little noise the wheels make as they shudder into the hold *shortly after takeoff. But the second* most terrifying sound has got to be, "Chicken or beef?" How many passengers have asked themselves whether, with an important meeting ahead, they should risk the beef bourguignonne? And how many passengers can have failed to wonder why the serving size seems calculated to fit neatly into the motion-discomfort bag?

Among the most terrifying sounds an airline passenger can hear are the words, 'Chicken or beef?'

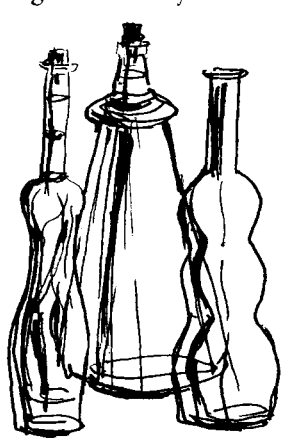
So we at NATIONAL REVIEW asked ourselves, Why swallow such an atrocious meal? Before you head for the sky, why not carry on some ambrosia in your carry-on luggage? Of course, being reasonable sorts, we didn't want to take things too far—as Digby Anderson may have done several years ago in *NR* when he suggested, as an in-flight meal, oysters packed in seaweed accompanied by squid served in its own ink (Sept. 14, 1992). But we were still taken with the idea.

So we enlisted some of the top talent in the Manhattan food industry to put together the perfect in-flight meal. There were only three restrictions. First, the dishes had to be things that could be served cold. (Unwieldy heating apparatus do, of course, exist. And flambés can be done with only a match. But the purpose of the contest was substance, not style.) Second, the meals had to be portable—no wild boar. Finally, more than a sandwich was required—on the grounds that there is no point in having a professional chef produce something which one could reasonably be expected to put together oneself. All the contestants performed marvelously, and we extend thanks to each of them. But two were particularly impressive. Herewith, *we award a shared prize for first place.*

Vittorio Assante of Da Vittorio on East 20th Street was initially skeptical about the idea. Having adapted to life in the land of the free, he had assumed that there was a law against transporting food onto a plane. But when we informed him that, in fact, it had not yet been outlawed, he rose to the challenge and prepared a lavish feast.

He presented such large portions of pasta salad, venison carpaccio, and boiled vegetables, spread out on three plates, that it was not instantly apparent that the meal had not violated rule number two. However, a brief examination established that it would in fact fit below the seat, or in the overhead compartment. And, indeed, smaller portions could easily be arranged. Clearly, Mr. Assante is used to traveling first class.

The pasta was *penne al dente* with chopped tomatoes, pesto, and chopped *mozzarella di bufala*, all sprinkled with salt and pepper and extra-virgin olive oil. The venison carpaccio was a filet of venison, sliced thin, served with sliced ripe tomatoes, Parmesan, and white truffles on a bed of arugula, once again bathed in extra-virgin olive oil, with a dash each of lemon, mustard, and salt and pepper. Mr. Assante explained that since venison was the leanest meat—far leaner than beef—it was appropriate for those who would be spending their day squeezed into a comfortable six inches of leg room. (He also mused about making a summer special out of the venison, it had turned out so well.) The boiled vegetables—peas, carrots, potatoes, and zucchini—were neatly arranged like a pinwheel. While the presentation might not survive being lugged through an airport, the effect was striking and the flavor fantastic.



Our second first-place award goes to Chris Dillon of the Park Bistro on Park Avenue South. Mr. Dillon's entry was a bit more portable—a guinea-hen terrine and a *sandwich de Provence*—perhaps because over the last several years he has done a fair amount of traveling. In 1995, he flew to Paris to work for Joël Robuchon—without, he confesses, first taking the precaution of obtaining a position from Mr. Robuchon. Every morning at 8 o'clock, he went to Robuchon's and asked if he could have a job. Every morning for a month the door was slammed in his face. Finally someone told him that, if he came back the next day, he could work—for one day only—cutting vegetables. He returned the next day. And then the next. Nobody asked him to leave, and so he stayed. For four months. He later got jobs at Pierre Gagnarie in Paris and Picholine in New York—and spent the time in between working as a bodyguard and a bouncer—before ending up as head chef at the Park Bistro.

The guinea-hen terrine was adapted from a lunch special occasionally available at the restaurant. The hen was stuffed with wild mushrooms, black truffles, roasted apples, and fresh herbs; and it was served with a compote of fresh autumn fruits and vegetables. For a short flight, the hen would make an ideal meal by itself. But for longer flights, Mr. Dillon suggested that it be accompanied by a *sandwich de Provence*, made by hollowing out a large loaf of *pain-pétard* and stuffing it with grilled eggplant, zucchini, peppers, goat cheese, and sliced caramelized onions, all mixed with olive oil and a clove of garlic. The bread is then allowed to sit for an evening, and is cut into heavenly slices the next day. All in all, a feast fit for a frequent flier.

The results of the contest demonstrate the feasibility of a superb airline meal. Perhaps Zabar's and Balducci's will start carrying substitute fare for those with discriminating palates.

But whether or not you can find the exquisite cuisine of a Da Vittorio or Park Bistro in your neighborhood, before you take off again, you should certainly think about take-out. □

Mr. Oliver is NR*'s articles editor.*

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The Bermuda Triangle-Sun

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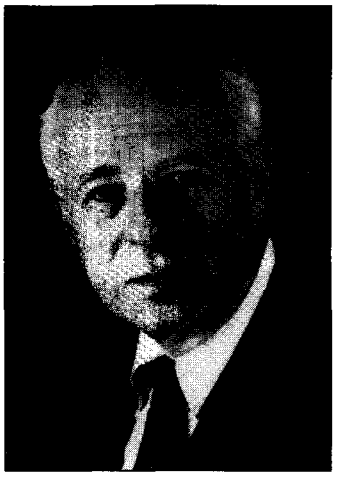

By SANDI BEECH
NR *Cruise Correspondent*

NEW YORK, Jan. 8—*National Review*'s Office of Cruise Affairs announced today that Norman Podhoretz, the former editor of *Commentary* magazine, and his wife, Midge Decter, the famed social critic and author, will be joining the line-up of high-powered celebrities headlining the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise***.

NR officials also announced that sales for the spectacular, star-filled sea faring "bon voyage," scheduled for May 23–30, 1998, are continuing at a "brisk pace," with some 120 cabins already booked by magazine subscribers and friends.

The addition of Podhoretz and Decter to the cruise's celebrity contingent is "a tremendous coup that gives extra *Ummph* to an already-super cast of conservative thinkers," said the official. "The only downside," he joked, "is that we may cause an intellectual drought on the mainland."

Joining Podhoretz and Decter on the cruise to beautiful Bermuda aboard Celebrity Cruises' luxurious MV *Zenith* will be new *NR* Editor **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan** (now *NR*'s Editor-at-Large), Washington Editor **Kate O'Beirne,** Judge **Robert Bork**, author **Dinesh D'Souza**, California "Propostion 209" champion **Ward Connerly**, *U.S. News & World Report* columnist **John Leo**, syndicated columnist **Mona Charen**, former *NR* Publisher **William Rusher**, and Media Research Center founder **Brent Bozell**.

In a bit of unfortunate news, **Brit Hume**, the Managing Editor of FOX News Channel's D.C. bureau, has informed *NR* that he will be unable to attend the cruise. "But the Podhoretz-Decter addition more than makes up for Brit's loss," said one *National Review* official, who also added that other celebrity invitations are "still outstanding."

As has happened on its previous trips, the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise*** will showcase a series of stimulating seminars, featuring editors and special guests "discussing the two issues," says *NR* Publisher Edward A. Capano, "which raise the most passion among conservatives—media bias and political correctness."

In addition to the seminars, the cruise will be the setting for a number of other exclusive events, including several cocktail parties ("always wonderful parties," says one *NR* official, "where our subscribers get to meet, mingle, and schmooze with our special guests"), and an *NR* cruise tradition: late-night poolside "smokers" featuring classic **H. Upmann** cigars and top-shelf cognac.

"In a nutshell," says Capano, "the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise*** will be a full week of warm, sunny days, balmy, star-filled nights, stimulating conversation, beautiful sights, private, sandy beaches, exhilarating social events, sumptuous cuisine, rest, relaxation, and conservative camaraderie and revelry."

The setting for this spectacular seven-day event will be Celebrity Cruises' MV *Zenith*, which served as the vessel for *National Review*'s spectacular 1995 "40th Anniversary" cruise. Fodor's authoritative *Worldwide Cruises and Ports of Call 1997* describes the *Zenith*'s cabins as "modern and quite roomy," the food "superior" (indeed, Celebrity is renowned for having the best cuisine on the High Seas), the entertainment "lavish," the service "friendly and first-class," and the facilities, well, endless (the *Zenith* has a complete spa and health club, oodles of bars, lounges, shops, pools, whirlpools, plus a show room, casino, disco, card room, library, as well as activities of all types and for all ages, etc.—just about everything you'd expect of a world-class vessel.)

Prices for the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise***—which include participation at all *NR* seminars and social events, your stateroom, all meals, plus taxes, port fees, and gratuities—start at a low $2,024 per person.

NR officials warn that the magazine's "lock" on cabin space will expire in several weeks. "I wouldn't delay booking," said one *NR* staffer. "There's no guarantee that we'll have any space left to offer subscribers when our exclusive hold on cabin space expires. You know the old saying: 'You snooze, you lose.'"

Don't delay: get your FREE copy of the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise*** Information Kit today by calling, toll-free, 1-888-335-4001.

Until next time, this has been Sandi Beech, *NR* Cruise Correspondent for *The Bermuda Triangle-Sun*.

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LETTERS

(Continued from page 2)

Sen. Lieberman wrote to me on May 22, 1989, "At what point life is *human* life, deserving of all the protections afforded human beings, I cannot say. Any delineation is arbitrary; with our imperfect knowledge, it cannot be otherwise." It seems to me that he should at least draw the line where Judaism, even Reform Judaism, does—or give us reason not to question to which he is more loyal: his faith or the Democratic Party.

Doris Gordon
Libertarians for Life
Wheaton, Md.

Initiative Gone to Pot

Your potshots at Steve Forbes ["The Week," Nov. 24] for opposing Washington State's Initiative 685 to liberalize drug laws missed the mark by a mile. As one of several conservatives who worked to defeat this poorly written and fraudulently labeled initiative, I welcomed Mr. Forbes's assistance. Unlike *NR*, he actually read the initiative. Washington voters did not vote against the medical use of marijuana; what we did vote against was the legalization of heroin, crack cocaine, and all other Schedule One drugs, as well as against the immediate release of more than three hundred hard-core felons from our prisons.

John Meyers
Mukilteo, Wash.

A Class Act?

Bernadette Malone's hit piece on Bob Livingston ["Cajun Butterknife," Dec. 31] is a perfect example of the tendency of conservatives to try to eat their own. Fortunately for the conservative movement, Rep. Livingston is tough enough not to be eaten. Examples of his long and continuing service to conservatism and to this country are legion, from leadership for the Contras, for SDI, and for tough anti-crime measures, to his unprecedented assault on federal spending as Appropriations Committee chairman. Conservatives should praise him—not criticize him—for trying to head off PR disasters by choosing his fights carefully. All too many of *NR*'s heroes exhibit the tactical sense of George Custer. Bob Livingston is a straight shooter, a class act, a patriot, and a true, committed conservative. He's a workhorse with lots of heart, and I await the day *NR* comes to its senses and proclaims him a hero.

Quin Hillyer
Little Rock, Ark.

The People's Pataki

Over the last three years, Gov. George Pataki has cut taxes by more than $6 billion, returning hard-earned money to the pockets of New York taxpayers. According to the National Governors' Association, Mr. Pataki leads the nation in cutting taxes. In addition, the governor's policies on welfare reform, cutting red tape, and fiscal responsibility have made New York more affordable to live and work in.

So it should be obvious to your readers that your report that George Pataki was forming an anti-consumer cartel "to thwart federalist competition" ["The Week," Dec. 8] lacks substantive credibility. Several states are in discussion with direct marketers on a plan to lower the administrative costs for the collection of state sales taxes in return for back liability relief and simplified audits. However, the New York State Tax Department is merely an observer to the discussions—looking out for the best interest of New York taxpayers and for opportunities to promote new business and economic development in the state. Hardly a concerted gubernatorial effort to create a cartel.

Bradford J. Race
Secretary to the Governor
Albany, N.Y.

Orderly Courts

Lino Graglia ["Order in the Court," Nov. 24] accurately identifies the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment as the locus of the judicial assault on the Constitution, but ignores Congress's complete power to enforce the Amendment and challenge the judiciary. He writes that "the Court has wrongly converted [the Fourteenth Amendment] into an empty vessel into which any meaning can be poured." But because Congress has express authority under Section 5 to "enforce" the Amendment's provision, Congress is constitutionally obligated—by its very oath of office—to enforce it *rightly*.

Dennis Teti
Tricentennial Foundation for America
Washington, D.C.

Capital of Something

I find myself in the uncomfortable position of disagreeing ever so slightly with Priscilla Buckley. She writes ["Paris, Apartment-Style," Dec. 8] of a hotel she had used previously, when it cost a paltry $65 to $125 per night including breakfast: "the last time we checked it, it cost $450 a night (plus breakfast), which is not the way we like to spend our money in the gastronomic capital of the world." Let us quibble. Although such questions are a matter of taste, I would take Lyons as the gastronomic capital of France (not necessarily the world). Furthermore, the existence of a hotel that successfully charges $450 per night proves once again that Paris's crowning title is the ripoff, not gastronomic, capital of the world. But many thanks to Miss Buckley for revealing ways to avoid the first-class ripoffs offered by some Parisian hotels.

William F. Miller
Corpus Christi, Tex.

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

Answer Me, Yes or No

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 16

The language they use! Convolution time.

Lani Guinier, President Clinton's nominee in 1993 to be the head of the civil-rights division at the Justice Department, seized exultantly on Mr. Clinton's question at the Akron forum on race. The question was directed to Abigail Thernstrom, the distinguished scholar and co-author, with her husband, of the epochal *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*. Mrs. Thernstrom is one of the forum sitting there, and the President wheels on her and asks, "Do you favor the United States Army abolishing the affirmative-action program that produced Colin Powell? Yes or no?" The inherent situation is intimidating. In the first place, the interrogator is the President of the United States, and people don't talk to the President in language they'd think appropriate in talking to their peers. Moreover, there's a demagogic echo chamber in most audiences which reacts delightedly to politically correct slurs.

Professor Guinier sighs, "Such an exchange could have influenced the fate of Proposition 209, which passed with 54 per cent of the vote, yet the President was strangely silent. . . ."

What might Mrs. Thernstrom have replied?

Well, she could have taken the bull by the horns and asked, "Yes or no, do I favor the electoral system that produced President Clinton?" That would have been an entirely excusable quid pro quo. If Mr. Clinton had stuttered out a response, she'd have had to make good her ultimatum. "No no, Mr. President. Just say Yes or say No."

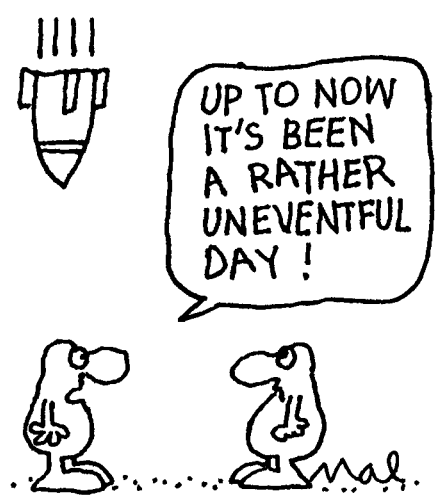
The quite incidental victim of the exchange was Gen. Powell. He entered the Reserve Officers' Training Corps in 1954 as a student at the City College of New York, and what do you know? He graduated at the top of the college's ROTC class of 1958 with the rank of cadet colonel, the highest rank in the corps. Was affirmative action responsible for that? No, dear, affirmative action began seven years later. George Washington Carver made it without affirmative action—Yes or no? ANSWER ME THAT!!!

Language, language, the forlorn corpse of modern democratic exchange. Mr. Clinton is by no means the premier practitioner of verbal roadkill. Sen. Kennedy set a high mark in his declaration opposing Judge Robert Bork for the Supreme Court —the famous remark promising that if Judge Bork were sent up to the Court, blacks would return to the back of the bus and abortionists to the use of clothes-hangers. Last Sunday, asked to characterize Republicans, Sen. Kennedy gave his straight-from-the-shoulder answer. "The Republican Party is basically anti-civil-rights, anti-immigration, anti-woman, and anti-worker." One likes to think that if such a statement had been made at one of the little seminars conducted by Socrates, everybody would have risen and followed Socrates out into fresh, wholesome air.

But people don't mind. They have got used to it. And Sen. Kennedy has acquired, in the plenitude of his uproarious career, a kind of creepy gravitas. His eyes shut just a little, his voice is level and calm and authoritative, and whatever issues from his lips is made to sound as if being escorted out by the National Academy of Arts & Sciences dressed in inaugural garb. What if in answer to a historical question he said, "The Nazis have been consistently misrepresented for the benefit of the merchants of death who got rich during the war"? Would you not agree there'd be a moment of silence before the little buzz of wonder?

What did poor Mrs. Thernstrom say? By *the way, the President referred to her as* "Abigail," as if she were the upstairs maid. She said, "I do not think it is racial preferences that made Colin Powell—"

"Yes or no," had been the President's order. Now he interrupted: "He thinks he was helped by it."



Gen. Powell had been awarded 11 medals before affirmative action had got to first base. Mrs. Thernstrom tried one more time. "The overwhelming majority of Americans want American citizens to be treated as individuals," she said. She even tried to make a point ever so slightly distinctive. "These preferences," she said, "disguise the problem. The real problem is the racial skills gap."

But that was lost. Ward Connerly, the national leader of the fight for equal treatment under the law, has been granted a cameo appearance at the White House, at the next general forum on the race question.

What might he say in a world in which language is carefree and corrupt? Well, he might say, "Mr. President, the Democratic Party is basically anti-individual-rights, anti-white, anti-property, anti-American. Isn't that right, Mr. President? Answer Yes or No." □

UN Accounting

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19

The question of the United Nations and bills not paid by Uncle Sam is vexing at several levels. First question: Is the assessment fair? Should the United States be paying 25 per cent of the UN's bills?

The answer here isn't as simple as: Well, does the United States generate one-quarter of the world's wealth? Dues are brought into two UN houses, the first for administrative expenses, the second for peacekeeping expenses. We are down for 25 per cent of the first and 30 per cent of the second, figures that are indeed designed to reflect wealth.

But the whole thing is dated. As an article in *Policy Review* noted, "Russia, for example, pegged at 10 per cent for the administrative budget and 11.5 per cent for peacekeeping, pays too much. China, on the other hand, which claims a GNP in excess of $2 trillion, pays less than 1 per cent on both scales. The spread overall is from 25 and 30.4 per cent for the U.S. to one-hundredth of 1 per cent for 85 countries—close to a majority of the UN's total membership of 185. Saudi Arabia and Brunei are ranked equally with Benin and Bangladesh."

The answer to the question of corresponding wealth doesn't close off discussion. Not unless the United States had a veto power over every penny the UN spends. If you generate 25 per cent of the world's wealth, it doesn't follow that you

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are correspondingly obliged to pay 25 per cent of the expenditures of the UN. If the UN voted outlays judged, by U.S. congressional analysts, outrageous in size and irresponsible in detail, what form of protest would the U.S. have except to put a cap on its contributions?

Now just here we have the makings of a serious impasse. Mr. Clinton's UN ambassador, Bill Richardson, addressing the National Press Club a week ago, said something that violates the canons of diplomatic-talk, and from this departure we must assume that he intended to register the signal incandescently. What he said was: The United States has asked for a reduction in the size of its annual contribution to the UN. Let me tell you right now: It's not going to happen.

How is Congress supposed to reply to such language as that? The answer: Pretty much as it has been doing: deadbeating.

But this is an unattractive position, and humiliating. If we have been committed to paying 25 per cent of the UN's budget, then movement away from that commitment should be done with administrative punctilio. We should have said: a) We apply for UN-sanctioned reduction of our responsibility from 25 per cent to 20 per cent; b) If that reduction does not come before 1998, we will ourselves trim the sum available to the UN by one-25th every year until it gets to 20 per cent.

To say it that way relieves you of sounding like a deadbeat pure and simple. What you'd have is: a deadlock on the cost of membership in the United Nations, on which question the subscribing nation would justifiably plead sovereignty.

But there is the second complication. A majority in Congress, led by Rep. Christopher Smith of New Jersey, declines to pay the UN to promote abortion or to circularize knowledge on how to effect abortion. Indeed, Mr. Smith's opposition goes further and gets into the business of family planning.

Whatever the mix, the result of congressional opposition was to derail a bill which would have remitted one billion dollars to the UN in substantial discharge of our obligation. The hue and cry within the UN was lusty, as one would have guessed. Congress was scolded and told that it was not the moral tribune of the entire world and should acknowledge the right of others to etc. etc. The way Congress deals with problems of this kind is pretty efficient: It ignores them. The tacit position of the U.S. is that if the UN goes too far in undesirable directions, it can do its own financing. This position has not always been disapproved. When 13 years ago we dropped our support for UNESCO, in part because of UNESCO's discriminations against Israel, the general sentiment was: When the UN goes too far, the U.S. should be free to register its objections in a concrete way.

But Rep. Smith and Senator Jesse Helms should put their heads together and devise a formula for now and years ahead that spares us the indignity of the defaulting rich neighbor, when we could be the benevolent older brother, watching the traffic go by but, every now and then, raising an admonitory hand: Slow down. □

Dark Night For George W.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 9

George W. Bush has a helluva problem. The Court said No to the lady's final appeal against the death sentence. The lady in question is youngish (38) and beautiful. She is a born-again Christian. In the course of her conversations with the prison chaplain, all of them conducted with bullet-proof glass separating minister and postulant, a courtship developed, and lo! they have been married, though they have never shaken hands. The prosecutors who got her sentenced have asked for clemency. So also a pro-death-penalty former U.S. attorney. So also the sister of one of the murder victims. Pat Robertson, the Pope of the Christian Coalition, has publicly requested clemency, while reiterating his support for capital punishment.

The mechanics of commutation are complicated in a way that helps Gov. Bush. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles has got to acquiesce in a gubernatorial pardon. Ah yes, but the members of the Board are named by the governor. Which means that although George W. has a little camouflage working for him, in fact he is seen as the man who will decide whether Karla Faye Tucker dies at midnight on January 30.

The case has mostly to do, of course, with—women. Should they be put to death?

There are other factors, contingently relevant. Karla Tucker began using marijuana at age 8, went to heroin at 10, was a groupie at 13, married at 17, and turned to prostitution to support her drug habit. Question: Did the drugs transfigure her true nature, adding up to a reason for clemency?

Karla Tucker took part in a crime of extraordinary brutality. There were two victims of her and her collaborator (a man, since dead of natural causes). A recitation of the details of the crime she committed makes the reader bloodthirsty for revenge.

But the case of course hangs on her sex. The last time Texas executed a woman was during the Civil War. The last time anybody executed a woman was 1984, in North Carolina, by lethal injection. Do the figures reflect the incidence of murders committed by women? Murders committed by women are dramatically fewer. Still, there are seven women on Texas's Death Row right now. That's just under two per cent of the total (400) on Texas's Death Row, but it means that if Gov. Bush is going to be influenced critically by the sex of Karla Tucker, he is going to walk into the identical bind at least six more times, assuming he is re-elected.

Now here are a couple of considerations that are politically fretful. The politically correct position is that men and women are equal in respect of everything that bears on civil, or indeed military, life. What this appears to tell us is that no latitudinarian consideration of any kind is to be given to Karla's being a woman. Agreed?

Well, not exactly . . . There is no way to get rid of the strain on psychological predispositions that twangs when anomalous situations confront us. The mother in South Carolina who sent her two sons to drown a couple of years ago committed a crime infinitely more horrifying, in public sensibility, than if the murderer had been a man. A woman soldier's being killed by an enemy bayonet in front-line combat is more dismaying than the identical thing's happening to a man—don't try to reason with this; simply accept that it is so.

And then we touch upon an unmentionable: Karla Tucker is a born-again Christian! If her sentence were commuted, what would the American Civil Liberties Union say? Nothing. But what would the ACLUers be thinking? Right: a violation of the First Amendment. True separation of church and state means that no governor should incline toward clemency for anyone merely because that person has embraced religion. Amen.

We normal people are entitled to believe that this is hogwash, preferring to believe that clemency by a secular institution is understandable; and that someone who has convincingly embraced Christianity can be presumed to have gone at least part of the way in atoning for sins committed.

But of course there'd be a popular reaction against what might be thought of as a penitentiary scam. When Charles Colson embraced Christianity while in prison there were hoots of ridicule: hardly credible now, after a generation's exemplary life as head of The Prison Fellowship.

So, if you were George W.'s political advisor, what would you counsel? The same thing George W.'s religious advisor would urge on him? □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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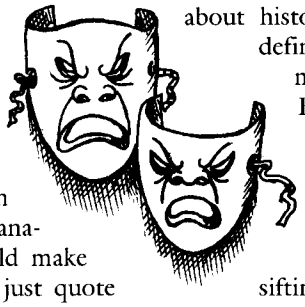
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

A CARDINAL rule of writing is never interrupt yourself to explain something. If you must bring up an obscure topic, drop informative hints about it as you go along so that you don't end up with the entire explanation all in one place. This keeps you from skidding to a stop and sounding teacherish. Otherwise it's better to omit the obscure topic altogether, or as mothers might put it: If you can't say it interestingly, don't say it at all.



The American way of history turns this rule into a crapshoot, as I discovered recently when I reviewed a biography of John Quincy Adams. A full explanation of what happened would make me sound teacherish, so I'll just quote the note I faxed to the editor:

"Re: JQA and *Amistad*.

"I wrote this review before the publicity about the movie hit TV. I didn't want to go off on a tangent about what was then a little-known slave mutiny, so I decided to leave it out, but now it's all over the tube. If there's still time, stick in a sentence about it so they won't think I live in the Gobi Desert."

I would love nothing better than to live in the Gobi Desert provided the Mongolians stayed snubbed. I can see my yurt now, and myself curled up in a yak skin, reading my new seven-volume, unabridged *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. I haven't even started it yet, but reading every word of Gibbon is my life's ambition because I love history, but as usual I'm in the wrong country.

Americans hate history. "You're history!" screamed the girl as she threw her engagement ring in her fiancé's face. "That's ancient history!" snarled the ad director to the un-hip copywriter. An exception to our aversion might be "social history," the offshoot discipline concerned with everyday life. It's useful during nostalgia trips when we yearn for the decade du jour, usually the Fifties, or during periodic offbeat fetishes like the recent Jane Austen revival, when we develop an intense curiosity about dead customs, usually female virtue. Otherwise we would rather keep on thinking about tomorrow and consign history to the dust bin of history.

But we can't. It is a fact universally unacknowledged that there won't be any tomorrow unless we think constantly about history in terms of its new definition: material for commemorative minutes for Black History Month.

Our age of bigger and better apologies is unsuited to the traditional methodology of history. The meticulous sifting and weighing practiced by Gibbon is much too slow for people in the throes of multicultural panic, so we take our history like those freshmen who are so desperate for acceptance by a frat that they drink a whole quart of whisky all at once and then drop dead.

Our discovery of the voyage of the *Amistad* is typical. In the sea lanes of the American publicity machine you can sail from total ignorance to total saturation in about two weeks. Every slavery movie is launched full speed ahead and proceeds so steady on course that the promotion for one movie is interchangeable with any other.

First we get the interviews with the forthcoming movie's producer or director, who explains how he stumbled upon an obscure historical incident that he had never heard of but which immediately began to obsess him. "I felt wrung out and, yes, haunted." Soon we will all know the feeling well.

Next come the interviews with the cast, who look studiously grim—or if white, studiously wracked—as they describe how they felt during the filming. "It left me depressed and, yes, angry" . . . "I felt numb and, yes, sick." After the last of the clips has been shown, we hear from the white psychologist from Berkeley who was invited on the show to analyze how depictions of whippings and massacres affect race relations. "Total honesty leads to mutual trust and, yes, oneness."

Thanks to all the film clips and spot ads, the *Amistad* was soon ubiquitous and, yes, a household name. Once the movie finally opened we had to endure the "dialogue," America's two-ish name for a cast of thousands all sounding off at once on op-ed pages, Sunday shows, and hastily called forums. Meanwhile, in Akron, Bill Clinton was dialoguing with Abigail Thernstrom about Colin Powell, our own Scipio Africanus, adding a little touch of Gibbon in the night.

THE crisis in slave-movie dialogues comes when whites think they have made amends, only to learn that blacks are offended and, yes, angry. Take the dialogue between *Time*'s Richard Schickel and the *Washington Post*'s Courtland Milloy. In Schickel's rave review of *Amistad*, he wrote that showing the slave leader Cinqué with "the wild rolling eye of what might be a desperate and panicked animal" captured the dehumanization of slavery.

An infuriated Milloy countered that Spielberg used the same crazed-eye shot for the T-Rex in *Jurassic Park*, and suggested that he equates black men with bloodthirsty dinosaurs. Furthermore, "There are really no bad white people in the movie," which "is essentially about how two white guys . . . come to the rescue of some Africans bound for slavery," making *Amistad* merely "a tribute to the American justice system."

Then, suddenly, America changed boats. *Amistad* was sunk, as it were, by *Titanic*, the whitest event in history, and there's going to be hell to pay. The *Washington Post* has already shored up against the gathering tempest with a Style feature of remarkable desperation, "The Toast of the Titanic: Oral Tradition Carries On Legend of Lone African American," about a mythical black stoker named Shine (the *Post* writer interrupts herself to apologize for the name) whose fictitious shipboard heroics were recounted in raplike toasts drunk in Harlem in 1912.

Crowding out a black slave ship with a white luxury liner is bad enough, but naught will atone for the scene in which Kate Winslet climbs on the *Titanic*'s prow and poses as the timeless symbol of the Great White Goddess: a ship's figurehead. Après moi le dialogue. □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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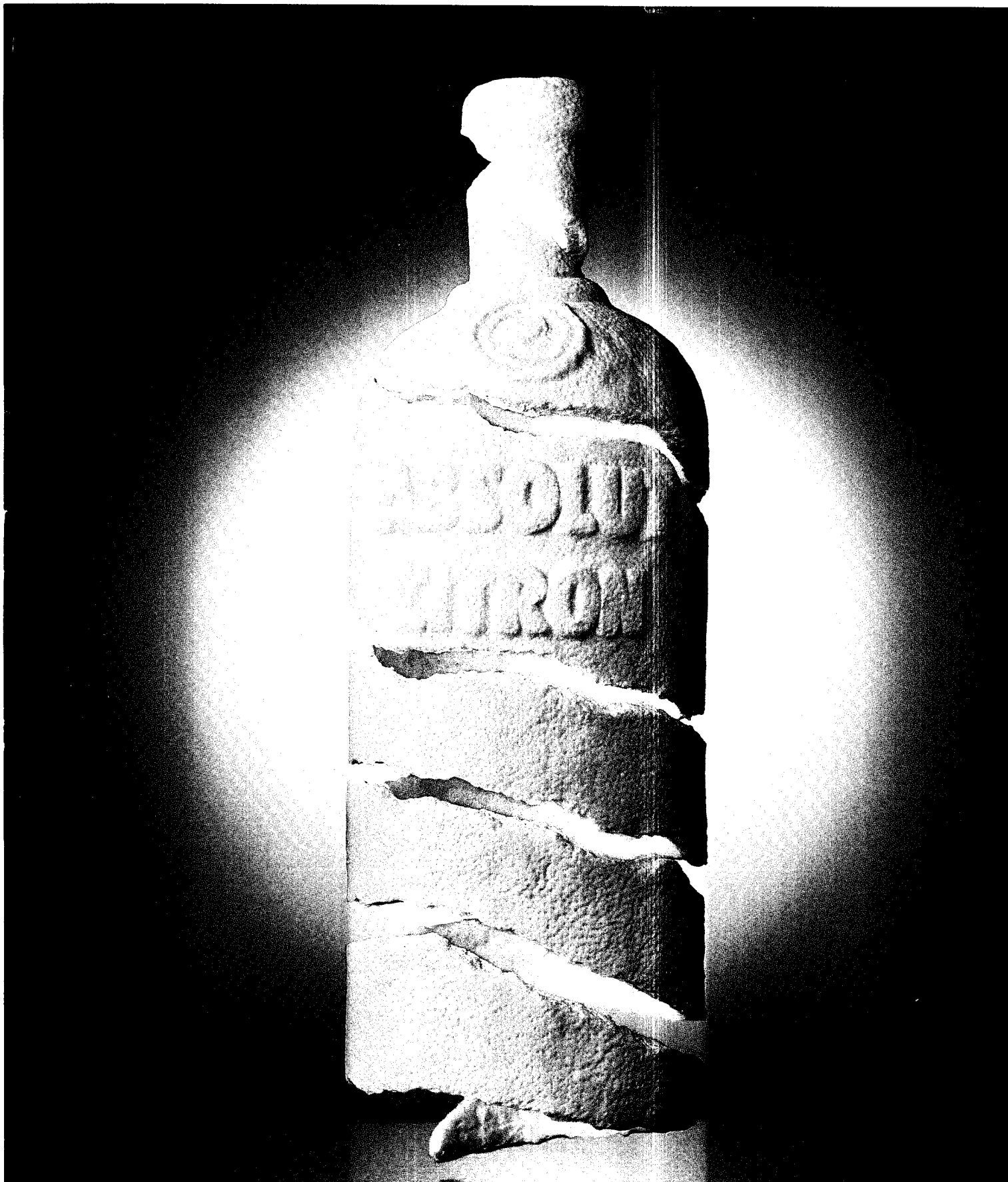

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